Poet Lore

VOLUME XXI SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1910 NUMBER V

THE RECONCILIATION

(A Play in Three Acts)

By Gerhardt Hauptmann

Translated from the German by Roy Temple House

CHARACTERS

Dr. Fritz Scholz, sixty-eight years old.
Minna Scholz, his wife, forty-six years old.
Auguste, twenty-nine years old
Robert, twenty-eight years old } their children.
Wilhelm, twenty-six years old

(As far as is possible, these actors should be made up to indicate a family resemblance.)

Frau Marie Buchner, forty-two years old.
Ida, her daughter, twenty years old.
Friebe, servant, fifty years old.

(Time, a Christmas eve in the eighties, in a lonely country house on the Schützenhugel at Erkner (Brandenburg).

(The scene of all three acts is a high-ceilinged, roomy hall, whitewashed, adorned with old-fashioned pictures, with antlers and the heads of various sorts of animals. A chandelier of deer antlers is hung from the center of the timbered ceiling and filled with fresh candles. In the middle of the rear wall an enclosed space with a glass door projecting inward. Through the door the heavy carved outside door can be seen. Above the door a pair of stuffed mountain-cock. To the right and left above the door two windows, frozen and partly banked in with snow. In the wall, right, an open gate-like arch which admits to the staircase. Two low doors in the same wall, one leading to the

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cellar, the other to the kitchen. In the opposite wall two doors leading into the same room. Between these doors an old grandfather's clock, on which sits a stuffed brown owl. The room is furnished with heavy old oak tables and chairs. Parallel with the side wall, right, a table with a white cloth. Right, in the foreground, a little iron stove with pipe running along the wall. All the door panels are ornamented with primitive paintings representing parrots, etc.)

Act One

(*The hall is adorned with green branches. On the stone floor lies a Christmas tree without a foot.* Friebe *is putting a foot together, on the upper step from the cellar. On opposite sides of table,* Frau Buchner *and* Frau Scholz *are busy fitting wax lights into their holders.* Frau Buchner *is a healthy-looking, well-nourished, friendly lady, dressed simply, substantially, and very neatly. Her hair simply arranged. Her motions are decided, but entirely natural. Her whole manner indicates unusual cordiality, which is absolutely genuine, even though her way of showing it may at times seem exaggerated. Her speech is careful; when she is excited it becomes declamatory. An atmosphere of satisfaction and comfort seems to surround her.* Frau Scholz *is different. A prematurely old person who is already beginning to break. Her form shows a tendency to unhealthy heaviness. Her skin is whitish-gray. Her toilet is less than unpretentious. Her hair is gray and loosely put together; she wears glasses. She is fitful in her motions, restless, generally speaks in a melancholy whining voice, and seems constantly excited. While* Frau Buchner *appears to live only for others,* Frau Scholz *is completely occupied with herself. On the table two five-branched candlesticks with candles. Neither the chandelier nor the candlesticks have their candles lighted. Burning oil lamp.*)

Friebe (*hits a vigorous blow with the hatchet*).— You never saw me miss a lick.

Frau Scholz.— Ffff! I can't stand your noise. Friebe! How often have I told you, your hatchet might slip. You shouldn't cut wood on stone.

Friebe.— Don't you worry, ma'am. What for was I in the gover'ment ten years, then?

Frau Buchner.— In the government?

Frau Scholz.— He was foreman of a gang in the royal forests.

Friebe.— Not a (*he strikes*) lick — ah — (*he strikes*) would you catch *me* amissin'. (*He rises, examining by the light of the lamp what he has made, and then fastens the tree upright on its new support.* Friebe *is small,*

already somewhat bent, bandy-legged, and partially bald. His mobile little baboon face is unshaven. Hair and stubble beard are yellowish gray. He is a laborer who works around at odd jobs. His coat, a garment stiff with polishing powder, shoe blacking, dust, etc., was made for a man of twice the size, so that he has been compelled to roll up the sleeves and lap the skirts one far over the other. He wears a brown, relatively clean porter's apron, from under which he draws out a snuffbox from time to time, and takes a pinch with enthusiasm. The tree is ready. FRIEBE *has lifted it to the table; he stands in front of it and studies it.)* It's a big, fine, good-lookin' fir tree, all right. (*To the ladies, with deprecation and embarrassment.*) That's what it is, ain't it?

Frau Buchner.— With your experience you ought to be able to tell whether it is or not.

Friebe.— Well, I guess I ought to! Now the fir tree ——

Frau Scholz (*interrupts him impatiently*).— We mustn't lose time, Friebe. My daughter said, be sure and send Friebe right to me.

Friebe.— Well, well! —'s all the same to me. (*With a deprecating gesture, exit through the kitchen door.*)

Frau Buchner.— Is he such a useful man as all that?

Frau Scholz.— Oh, pshaw! He's a crazy fool. If 'twasn't for my husband — that's just the way my husband was. This old tobacco-sniffer was just what he wanted, he had to have him around him all the time, or he wasn't happy. Such a strange man he was!

Auguste (*rushes in the front door, in haste and trouble. Once inside, she pushes the glass door hurriedly shut, and throws herself against it, as if to prevent some one's entrance.*)

Frau Scholz (*in violent excitement*).— O Lordolordolord! ! !

Frau Buchner.— What — what's the matter?

(AUGUSTE *is tall and strikingly thin, her toilet exaggeratedly stylish and tasteless. Fur jacket, fur cap, muff. Face and feet long; features sharp, with thin lips, which fit tight together and curve bitterly. She wears glasses. To her mother's uneasiness she adds a pathological condition of defiance. She spreads about her an atmosphere of discontent, discomfort, and forlornness.*)

Auguste.— Outside — good gracious! — somebody followed me!

Frau Buchner (*pulling out her watch*).— Perhaps it was Wilhelm — no, not yet. The train can't be in yet. (*To* AUGUSTE.) Just wait a minute. (*She reaches for the latch, to open the door.*)

Auguste.— No, don't, no, don't.

Frau Buchner.— You're nervous, dear child. (*She goes through the*

glass door and opens the outside door. Somewhat timidly.) Is anybody there? (*Resolutely.*) Is anybody there? (*Pause, no answer.*)

Frau Scholz (*irritably*).—Well, now, that's a great way! Seems to me we've had excitement enough. It's enough to kill a person. What's the matter with you?

Auguste.— Matter! matter! (*defiantly.*) What's the matter with me?

Frau Scholz.— You're very nice to your mother!

Auguste.— Well, suppose I'm not! Isn't it enough to make a person afraid when — in the dark — all alone ——

Frau Buchner (*embracing her from behind, soothingly*).— Hothead, hothead! Don't get so excited! Come now! (*Helps her lay off her wraps.*) There now — there now!

Auguste.— But Frau Buchner, it's true!

Frau Buchner.— See here, my dear; we've been here four days, I should think. Won't you drop the Frau. Yes? All right. Well, then (*embraces and kisses* AUGUSTE *then* FRAU SCHOLZ).

Frau Scholz (*before she allows the embrace*).— Wait a minute, wait, I have wax on my hands.

Frau Buchner (*to* AUGUSTE, *who has gone to the stove to warm*).— Well now, don't you feel better? Was the entertainment pretty?

Auguste.— No, I shan't go any more. The air was bad, and it was hot enough to roast a person.

Frau Buchner.— Did the minister make a good talk?

Auguste.— Well, I know this much. If I had been poor and he had made a talk like that, I tell you I'd have thrown the stuff back at their feet.

Frau Buchner.— But it's a great blessing for the poor people.

(*Behind the scene a clear, beautiful voice is heard singing*):

When the pleasant linden tree
Blooms again,
Comes the old spring dream to me,
Floating through my brain.

(IDA *enters from the staircase. She is twenty years old and wears a plain black woolen dress. She has a fine, full form, a very small head, and at her first appearance her long yellow hair hangs loose. In her manner there is a calm content, a quiet cheerfulness and confidence; accordingly, the expression of her intelligent face is generally cheerful, but now and then it changes to mild earnestness and deep thoughtfulness.*)

Ida (*a handkerchief about her shoulders, several boxes in her arms*).— Did some one come in?

Frau Scholz.— Auguste has just frightened us good.

Ida (*pointing backward toward the stairs*).— It's rather uncanny upstairs, too! (*laughing*) I came down in a hurry.

Frau Scholz.— But child! Robert is up above you.

Ida (*puts the boxes on the table, opens them and takes out several objects.*) That doesn't help matters any. The whole story is deserted.

Frau Buchner.— Your hair must be nearly dry, isn't it?

Ida (*tossing her head gracefully, and throwing her hair back with the motion*).— Feel it!

Frau Buchner (*does so*).— No, it isn't! You should have taken your bath earlier, child.

Ida.— What a lot of trouble this mane does make! I've been cowering over the stove fully half an hour. (*She takes a yellow silk purse out of one of the boxes and holds it out to* AUGUSTE.) Isn't that a pretty color? Of course it's just a little joke. Has he had many purses?

Auguste (*shrugging her shoulders from the fur jacket which she is busy brushing off*).— I don't know. (*She brings her short-sighted eyes critically into the neighborhood of the purse.*) Rather careless piece of work. (*Buried in her cleaning again.*) The fur's ruined!

Ida (*bringing out a box of cigars*).— Oh, this is such fun. You said you had never trimmed a Christmas tree?

Auguste.— Well, it seems to me that that isn't just the thing for grown folks to do.

Frau Scholz.— She never did! If we'd even tried it my husband would have made a scene. When I was at home, now — Oh, whenever I think of it — what a beautiful life we had! Never a Christmas without a tree. (*Immitating her father's walk and manner.*) Oh, when father came from his office in the evening and brought the beau-eau-tiful Lehmann ginger cookies! (*She brings her thumb and index finger to her mouth as if she held a piece of the superb cakes in question.*) Yes, yes, that's all past! My husband — he never even ate dinner with us. He lived upstairs, we lived downstairs. We was a regular hermit. If we wanted anything of him we always had to get at him through Friebe.

Auguste (*busy with the stove*).— Oh, don't talk like that all the time!

Frau Scholz.— Well, don't you build such an awful fire!

Auguste.— Don't we want to keep warm?

Frau Scholz.— All of the heat flies out of the chimney to-day.

Auguste (*hesitates, irritated*).— Well, shan't I build any more fire, then?

Frau Scholz.— Don't bother me!

Auguste (*throws the coal shovel noisily into the box*).— All right, then, I won't. (*Exit left, raging.*)

Ida.— Oh, don't go, Gustie! (*To* FRAU SCHOLZ.) Just wait, I'll get her in a good humor again. (*Exit after her.*)

Frau Scholz (*resignedly*).— That's the way all my children are. Such a girl, such a girl! She has no self-control. Now she wants this, now that. Now she has an idea, and there's something she must do. Then she mopes around upstairs and doesn't say a word for weeks — then she's all alive and in the way again. Oh, gracious, how I envy you! Such a dear little thing as your daughter is ——

Frau Buchner.— But so is Gustie.

Frau Scholz.— How beautifully she plays the piano; and that charming voice! How I like to hear her sing!

Frau Buchner.— Why don't *you* play sometimes?

Frau Scholz.— I! that wouldn't do at all, I'd never hear the last of it! Auguste is so nervous, you know! Just like her father; he'd run from a piano.

Frau Buchner.— You ought to hear your Wilhelm play now. He is a perfect artist! What would Ida be without him? She has learned everything she knows from him.

Frau Scholz.— Yes, you said so before. He has talent; I know that. It was a pleasure to teach him.

Frau Buchner.— Yes, and he likes so to remember the time when his dear mother gave him his first lessons.

Frau Scholz.— Does he? Yes, yes, those were beautiful times, too. I thought then, everything turns out different. But it works me all up, anyway.

Frau Buchner— It works you up— what?

Frau Scholz.— Why, his coming. What does he look like now?

Frau Buchner.— He looks well, plump, healthy. You will be proud of your son.

Frau Scholz.— I can't believe the boy is really coming. It has nearly broken my heart. And what a lot of letters I've written! He never once even answered his old mother. How did you ever bring him to it? I can't *understand* it. I *can't* understand it.

Frau Buchner.— I? Oh, I didn't do it. It was Ida persuaded him.

Frau Scholz.— Robert doesn't bother his head about us either, but he at least comes home a few days each year, at Christmas. And he thinks he's doing a very generous thing! But Wilhelm — it has been six full years since he's been here; he and my husband, six full years! Does she get along well with him?

Frau Buchner.— Ida? Very well in every way.

Frau Scholz.— That is too wonderful! You can't imagine how close-mouthed the boy always was; just like his father. He never had a playmate, never had a school friend, never had anything.

Frau Buchner.— Yes, yes, that's the way he was at the beginning with us. He never would come to our house for anything except at lesson times.

Frau Scholz.— But he got to coming after a while?

Frau Buchner.— Well, yes. He said we must leave him alone for a while, and when he got to it he would come without asking. We had the good sense to let him do as he wished, and sure enough, after we had waited half a year, in fact, after we had quit waiting, he came. After that he came every day. So little by little he grew to be very different.

Frau Scholz.— You must use magic. The engagement is a miracle itself. I can't understand it at all.

Frau Buchner.— You must know how to treat geniuses. I learned how — my poor husband was another one.

Frau Scholz.— And about — about — his father? Has he told you that — that secret too?

Frau Buchner.— N-no, dear friend. That is the one matter, that is, in that one matter he hasn't been able to conquer himself yet. He said it didn't amount to anything, but you can well believe that he suffers terribly from that memory. He suffers just as much as ever. One reason for his suffering, of course, is that he keeps the affair secret. You know he must get over it, he must get over this, too.

Frau Scholz.— He must not hold a grudge — no, no, no, that isn't right! Honor thy father and thy mother — the hand that's raised against its own father — such hands will grow out of their graves. We quarreled, I know. Both of us have our faults, my husband and I, but this is *our* affair. No one has a right to interfere, least of all our own son. And who has had to suffer for it? I, of course. It is the old mother that has the broad back to bear the burden. My husband went out of the house, and that same day, half an hour later, Wilhelm went too. Talking didn't do any good. At first I thought they would come back, but they never had any idea of coming. And Wilhelm alone is to blame, and nobody else,— Wilhelm and nobody else.

Frau Buchner.— Wilhelm may be a great deal to blame, I am sure of that, but when a person has suffered so long for his sins ——

Frau Scholz.— No, no! Good gracious, what are you thinking about? A person can't get out of things as easy as that. That would be too much! Of course it's very good of you to take the boy's part as you've done, and

it's very nice of him to come; why shouldn't he? But after all, what good does all that do? The breaks are not so easy to heal over as all that. Yes, yes, there are breaks — great, deep chasms between us.

Frau Buchner.— But it seems to me that when we are honest and determined ——

Frau Scholz.— Determined, determined! Don't say that to me. I know better. You can wish and wish and wish a hundred times, and things don't change. No, no! your daughter's made of different clay entirely; she's one way and Wilhelm's another, and both of them stay the way they are. That's too high a viewpoint for folks like us; that's too high, too high. You can will as much as you please — yes, yes, good will,— your will is very good, but what does it get for you? I don't believe in such things.

Frau Buchner.— But I hope there is something in them.

Frau Scholz.— Oh, there may be. I won't deny anything. After all, I'm glad for the boy with all my heart, and it bothers me — it bothers me a good deal, and you may be sure you think it's easier than it is.

Ida (*enters left; to* Frau Scholz, *insinuatingly*).— She's gilding nuts, mother Scholz.

Frau Buchner.— It's high time, Ida! You must dress now. He may be here any minute.

Ida (*frightened*).— Oh! So soon?

Frau Scholz.— Oh, don't bother her! She's entirely too pretty for the boy now.

Frau Buchner.— I've laid out the blue dress for you. (*Calling after* Ida) and put on the brooch, do you hear? (*Exit* Ida.)

Frau Buchner (*continuing, to* Frau Scholz).— She doesn't care anything about jewelry. (*A knock at the outer door.*)

Frau Scholz.— Wait — who's that? (*To* Frau Buchner.) Won't you see about it — I can't go now, I ——

Frau Buchner (*calling at the stair door*)— Ida! Your Wilhelm is coming!

(*Enter* Dr. Scholz *through the glass door.*)

(Dr. Scholz *is strikingly large, bloated. Face fat, skin gray and dirty, eyes now expressionless, now glittering as if glazed; vague look. He wears bushy gray side whiskers. His motions are heavy and uncertain. He speaks by jerks, and gaspingly, articulates as if he had meal in his mouth, and stumbles over syllables. He is dressed carelessly, a faded velvet vest which was once brown, coat and trousers of indifferent color. Cap with a great visor, stone gray, of unusual shape. Rough silk neckcloth. Worn*

linen. He blows his nose occasionally on a great Turkey-red handkerchief. He carries in his right hand a cane with a staghorn head, wears a great military overcoat and carries a fur foot warmer over his left arm.)

Dr. Scholz.— Your servant! your servant!

Frau Scholz (staring at the doctor as if he were an apparition from another world.)— Fritz!

Dr. Scholz.— Yes, that's who I am.

Frau Scholz (throwing her arms around her husband's neck with a cry).— Fritz!

Auguste (opens the door, right, but withdraws at once).— Father!

(FRAU BUCHNER *steps back in astonishment, then exit through the side door, left.)*

Dr. Scholz.— I'm back, as you see. Now tell me first, is Friebe here?

Friebe (peeps through the kitchen door, frightened, then comes forward.) Herr Doctor! *(He rushes to him, seizes both his hands and kisses them.)* Well now, who'd a thought it? Lord, give me a dollar, who'd a thought it?

Dr. Scholz.— Pssst! — be careful — shut the front door tight. (FRIEBE *runs and obeys with joyous zeal.)*

Frau Scholz (beside herself with astonishment).— But tell me now, Fritz, tell me now — my thoughts are flying away from me *(embracing him with sobs).* Ah, Fritz! what a lot of pain you've given me in this long time!

Dr. Scholz (pushing his wife gently away).—Oh, yes, my life, too — we'd better not begin to blame each other — you're still the same old melancholy soul *(with something of bitterness).* Anyway, I wouldn't have troubled you, if it hadn't been — (FRIEBE *takes his overcoat, his foot bag, etc.)* There are circumstances, dear Minna, when a man has influential enemies, as I did ——

(Exit FRIEBE *through the stair door, with the doctor's effects.)*

Frau Scholz (sulking good humoredly).— But nobody told you to go, Fritz! You had a safe, warm home here. You might have lived here so nice!

Dr. Scholz.— I don't want to hurt your feelings, but there are some things about it you don't understand.

Frau Scholz.— Yes, I know; I'm a very simple-minded person, that is possible, but you weren't responsible for any one. It wasn't necessary at all that you ——

Dr. Scholz.— Pssst! it was very necessary. *(Somewhat mysteriously.)* After guilt comes atonement, after sin comes punishment.

Frau Scholz.— Well, yes, of course, Fritz, you had a good deal to bear, I know. *(From now till the conclusion of the conversation she keeps casting*

anxious glances toward the door, as if she feared WILHELM'S *arrival at any moment.*) We could have been so quiet, so contented, if you had only wanted to.

Dr. Scholz.— I had it all to bear, every bit of it.

Frau Scholz.— Now you're unfair again.

Dr. Scholz.— Well, maybe I am; but a lot of scoundrels banded together against me; that's known well enough. For example, just imagine — in the hotels — the waiters — I never could get a night's sleep, back and forth, back and forth in the corridors and always right in front of *my* door.

Frau Scholz.— But they certainly didn't disturb you on purpose.

Dr. Scholz.— They didn't? Well now, there you are, that's what you can't understand.

Frau Scholz.— Well, it's possible; the waiters are awful mean sometimes.

Dr. Scholz.— Mean? Well, I guess they are mean! Well, we could talk about that, but I have a headache (*reaches for the back of his head*) there! Oh, it's a scoundrelly business! I know well enough who I owe that to. I want to see now if I can drive it off with a sound sleep. I'm *very* tired.

Frau Scholz.— But there's no fire upstairs, Fritz.

Dr. Scholz.— Just imagine, in a trip about Vienna. No fire? That doesn't make any difference. Friebe will see to that at once. Tell me, how is Friebe now? I mean, can you still depend on him as much as ever?

Frau Scholz.— Friebe's just like he always was.

Dr. Scholz.— I thought so. Good by! (*After he has pressed his wife's hand he turns toward the staircase with a deeply thoughtful expression. Noticing the tree, he stops and stares at it absently.*) What does that mean?

Frau Scholz (*with a mixture of shame, fear, and emotion*).— We are keeping Christmas!

Dr. Scholz.— Keeping Christmas? (*After a long pause, lost in memories.*) It's — been — a— long — time — ago! (*Turning around and speaking with genuine emotion.*) And you've turned white, too.

Frau Scholz.— Yes, Fritz — both of us ——

(DR. SCHOLZ *nods and turns away. Exit through the stair entrance.*)

Frau Buchner (*enters hastily, left*).— And your husband's back again

Frau Scholz.— It's like — as if — I don't know! Lord, what am I to think about it?

Frau Buchner.— That it's a dispensation, dear friend, and we all must be thankful for it.

Frau Scholz.— Oh, how he looks! What a time he's had! Such a life as he must have lived; from one country to another, from one town — oh! he's paid the price.

(FRAU BUCHNER *starts for the stairs.*)

Frau Scholz (*frightened*).— Where are you going?

Frau Buchner.— To tell Ida the good news. (*Exit through the stair door.*)

Frau Scholz.— Oh, yes! No, what are you thinking about? We mustn't let him notice it! I know my husband too well for that! When he finds out there's anybody but him living upstairs — then I'd have trouble for sure!

Frau Buchner (*from the stairs*).— I'll go very softly ——

Frau Scholz.— Yes, yes! don't make any noise!

Frau Buchner.— I'll be very quiet.

Frau Scholz.— Olordolordolord! be as still as you can!

Auguste (*enters hastily, left*).— Father's here?

Frau Scholz (*beside herself*).— Yes, he's here! What are we going to do? And now Wilhelm's going to be here too. I'm nearly dead for fright. Suppose he met father? He might come in any minute. All the things a poor old woman like me has to stand!

Auguste.— O mamma, I have such a strange feeling, such a strange feeling! We had got so used to it without him. It's as if a dead man came back. I'm afraid, mamma!

Frau Scholz.— I suppose he's spent all his money.

Auguste.— Yes, that would be — Yes, yes! that would be the last straw.

Frau Scholz.— Well, I don't know how we'll come out if he has. We'll have to go out and beg.

Ida (*comes down dressed, joyfully. Pressing* AUGUSTE'S *hand cordially*).— Gustie! Is it true? Oh? I'm so glad! (FRAU SCHOLZ *and* AUGUSTE *are painfully moved.*)

(ROBERT *enters at one of the doors, left. Medium size, delicate, haggard, and pale. His eyes are deep set and glow at times as if he were ill. Moustache and full beard. He smokes Turkish tobacco from a pipe with a very short stem.*)

Robert (*lightly*).— It's getting uncomfortable here, mother.

Frau Scholz.— Now *he* begins on me!

Auguste.— Let him begin, if he wants to. (*Privately casting discontented glances at* IDA'S *toilet.*)

Robert (*to* IDA, *who has looked at him in surprise*).— Well, that's the way I'm built, Fräulein Ida!

Ida (*shakes her head incredulously*).— No — No ——

Robert.— Why not? I don't think it's worth the trouble to pretend to feel what I don't — It isn't worth the trouble.

Ida.— No — that isn't your real self.

Auguste (*breaking out*).— You'll drive us mad, Robert.

Robert.— Not intentionally. I don't want anybody to go mad!

Auguste.— I don't care!

Robert.— Ditto here.

Auguste.— Ditto, ditto — idiocy!

Robert (*with feigned astonishment*).— I beg your pardon. I supposed you'd be a little politer, but I see you don't care anything about outward charms any longer.

Ida (*soothingly*).— Oh, Herr Robert ——

Robert.— Well, I must defend myself, must n't I ——

Auguste (*half choked with tears*).— Oh, you ! — oh, you! There's no good in you, you brute, you're as mean as you can be! Frau Buchner! isn't it a shame? He — I — I've sat here with mother — here — the best — best part of my — life I've spent, while you — I — just like a servant girl ——

Robert.— That sounds very fine. I'll admit it does! You ought to go on the stage! (*Changing his tone, brutally.*) None of your bad jokes. Listen to me: You and your martyr-halo,— it's all tommyrot. It's somewhere else besides at home that the trouble lies; you know that well enough.

Auguste.— Mother! I can prove it by you, that I've refused three offers!

Robert.— Pshaw! If mother'd just shelled out the necessary financial wherewithal, of course the gentlemen would have taken *you* to boot.

Frau Scholz.— Money? (*Approaching* ROBERT, *holding out her hand.*) Here, take a knife and cut it out, cut the money out of my hand!

Auguste.—They'd have taken *me*, would they? Do you want to see the letters of refusal?

Frau Scholz (*interrupting*).— Children! (*She makes a motion as if she would bare her breast to the death thrust.*) Here, kill me first! Haven't you as much consideration for me as that comes to? Not that much? Haven't you? Good gracious Lord, not five minutes — I don't know what kind of children they are — not five minutes will they keep from quarreling.

Robert.— Yes, I know it; that's what I was saying; it's getting uncomfortable again.

(FRIEBE *comes downstairs officiously. He whispers something to* FRAU SCHOLZ, *whereupon she hands him a key. Exit* FRIEBE *into the cellar.*)

Robert (*has observed the scene silently. At the moment when* FRIEBE *vanishes in the cellar door*).— Aha!

Auguste (*has been watching* ROBERT. *Now she breaks out, furiously*).— You haven't a grain of mercy — not a grain!

Robert.— Ditto!

Auguste.— But you're playing a part. You're the wretchedest liar, and that's the disgusting part about it.

Robert.— About father, do you mean?

Auguste.— Of course about father.

Robert (*shrugging his shoulders.*)— If you think ——

Auguste.— Yes — that's what I think — yes — for — if you're not then — then — you're a miserable rascal!

Frau Scholz (*interrupting*).— Will this ever stop, or what ——

Robert (*indifferently*).— Then I *am* a rascal. Well, what of it? (IDA, *who has been waiting uneasily for some time, goes out through the glass door.*)

Auguste.— You shameless wretch!

Robert.—Shameless, that's right, so I am.

Frau Buchner.— Herr Robert! I don't believe you. You are better than you want to make us believe — better even than you think you are yourself.

Robert (*coldly, in a slightly sarcastic tone which becomes more evident as he proceeds*).— My dear Frau Buchner, I suppose it's very kind of you— but as I've said before, I don't exactly understand what I have done to deserve — I must even go so far as to refuse to take advantage of your kindness. My self-respect is, thus far at least, by no means so completely gone that I need anybody to ——

Frau Buchner (*slightly bewildered*).— That's exactly what I think about it. But — your father ——

Robert.— My father is to me a certain Doctor Fritz Scholz.

Auguste.— Yes, yes, there you go!

Robert.— And if I am not exactly as indifferent in the eyes of this person as any other fool he might meet, it is because I — well, because —(*he smokes a moment*) because I — because I am in a certain sense the product of his folly.

Frau Buchner (*apparently dazed*).— Excuse me! I can't let you go on this way any longer. How can you dare to say such things? It makes the cold chills run over me.

Frau Scholz (*to* FRAU BUCHNER).— Let him go, let him go! You'll see some things here that ——

Auguste.— Now what do you mean by that, mother? We can't help

the way we're made. Other people, with all their remarkable ways, aren't a bit better.

Robert.— Of course I know that there are still a few naïve souls who never feel comfortable unless they're pulling and patching at their fellowmen. Mediæval superstition! Nonsense!

Frau Buchner (*seizing* ROBERT *by both hands, heartily*).— Herr Robert! I have a mission to accomplish with you. That makes me proof against you. It's an honest fact, you haven't offended me in the least.

Robert (*a little taken back*).— You're a remarkable woman.

Friebe (*comes out of the cellar. He carries in his left hand three bottles of red wine, holding the necks between his fingers, and under his left arm a bottle of cognac. In his right hand he holds the key. Approaching* FRAU SCHOLZ *officiously*).— Now where is the cigars?

Frau Scholz.— Good gracious, Friebe! I don't know anything ——

Robert.— In the writing desk, mother.

Frau Scholz.— Oh, yes. (*She takes the bunch of keys and hunts nervously for the right one.*)

Auguste.— You know the key to the writing desk, don't you?

Robert.— The one with the straight ward.

Frau Scholz.— Yes, I know! — wait a minute!

Robert.— Let him have it ——

Frau Scholz.— Wait a minute, wait! — here! No, that isn't the one. I'm all out of my head. (*Holding the bunch of keys out to* ROBERT.) There!

Robert (*drawing off the right key and handing it to* FRIEBE).— There it is. Hope you'll enjoy father's cigars.

Friebe.— Well, he's at it just the same as ever! Never stops it all day long. (*A violent ring above.*) I'm a-comin'! (*Exit* FRIEBE *up the stairs.*)

Frau Scholz.— The wine won't last much longer, at that rate. Good gracious, where will it all end? All that wine! And such a lot of those expensive, strong cigars! I'm sure he'll ruin himself yet.

Robert.— That's something you've no right to deprive any one of.

Frau Buchner.— What do you mean?

Robert.— Every one must enjoy himself in his own fashion. As far as I'm concerned, at least, I'm not going to let any one take that privilege away from me. Not even if there's law against me. It's strange, though!

Frau Buchner.— What did you say?

Robert.— Strange!

Frau Buchner.— What makes you look at me like that? Is it something about me that's strange?

Robert.— In a way, yes. You have been at our house several days, and you're not thinking of going away yet.

Auguste.— How you do talk!

Frau Scholz.— Will you never stop it? (*Shakes her head in despair.*)

Robert (*with brutal violence*).— Well now, mother, isn't it the truth? Did anybody ever stay longer than half a day with us before? Haven't they all fallen away from us, the Nitzsches, the Lehmanns ——

Auguste.— Well, what do we care if they do? It's all the same to me. We can get along very well without them ——

Robert.— Yes, very nicely indeed! (*In a brutal tone.*) I tell you, Frau Buchner, right under the noses of company they'd tug at each other's hair till the dust would fairly fly. Mother would tear the table cloth off, father would make passes at her with the water bottle. Cheerful, wasn't it? Cheerful scenes, cheerful impressions for childhood?

Auguste.— You ought to crawl on the floor for shame, you miserable wretch! (*Exit hastily.*)

Frau Scholz.— Now do you see how it is? I've had to stand that for years and years! (*Exit, greatly moved.*)

Robert (*goes on unfalteringly*).— Of course there's nothing remarkable about it. A man of forty marries a girl of sixteen and drags her into this God-forsaken corner. A man who has been in the Turkish service as a physician, and has traveled over Japan. An educated, enterprising sort of fellow. A man who has been busy forging the most ambitious projects joins himself to a woman who has scarcely outgrown the idea that you can see America as a star in the heavens. Yes, it's a fact! I'm not exaggerating a particle. Yes, and that's the way it happened; a standing, dirty, putrefying marsh, and that's where we had the delightful privilege of taking our origin. Mutual understanding, respect, consideration, and this is the bed we children grew out of.

Frau Buchner.— Herr Robert! I'd like to ask you ——

Robert.— Very well! I'm not anxious to talk about it. Anyway, the story's ——

Frau Buchner.— No, no, I want to ask a favor of you; I'm in a hurry.

Robert.— A favor — of me?

Frau Buchner.— Couldn't you do it to please me? — couldn't you — wouldn't it be possible some way? Couldn't you just for this evening lay off your mask?

Robert.— What do you mean? Lay off my mask?

Frau Buchner.— Yes, for it is surely not your real face that you are showing us.

Robert.— What ideas you have!

Frau Buchner.— Promise me, Herr Robert ——

Robert.— But I haven't any idea ——

Frau Buchner.— Wilhelm, your brother Wilhelm may come any minute, and ——

Robert (*contemptuously*).— Frau Buchner! if you would only, only believe me! Your efforts, I'm sure of it, will fail absolutely. We're all rotten to the bone. Rotten in our makeup, completely ruined in our bringing up. You can't do anything with us. It all looks very nice. Christmas tree, lights, presents, family festivities, but it's all on the surface; tortured, black lie, nothing more! And now father shows up. If I didn't know how un-get-at-able he is, I swear, I'd believe you brought him here.

Frau Buchner.— The Lord knows I didn't! That was what started me to hoping in the first place. That can't be an accident, that's a dispensation of Providence. And so I say from the bottom of my heart, be friendly and kind to your brother. If you knew how well he speaks of you, with what love and respect ——

Robert (*interrupting*).— Yes, but what for?

Frau Buchner— What do you mean?

Robert.— Why should I be kind and good to him?

Frau Buchner— How can you ask that?

Robert.— Why shouldn't I?

Frau Buchner.— Well, in the first place, so as not to spoil his coming back to his parents' house at the very start.

Robert.— Oh, we'll not indulge in physical violence, as you seem to believe, and, anyway, if you think that when he enters these precincts a subtle emotion will take possession of him ——

Frau Buchner.— Your brother is such a good man, such a noble man at bottom! He fought a terribly hard fight before he could decide to take this step. I can assure you he is very anxious indeed to be reconciled with you.

Robert.— I can't understand at all what that means! Reconciled? What has he got to be reconciled about? I don't understand this business at all. We always got along pretty well together, we children. This is all a new thing to me. I haven't anything to reproach him with. Of course there are certain facts that aren't easy to get around. Let me ask you; do you think I have any particular reverence for my father? I haven't, have I? Not to speak of loving him. Do you see any evidences of filial gratitude? Of course you know there isn't any reason why there should be. All my life we have got along best with each other when we simply ignored

each other. Now and then, when we got to blaming each other for our mutual misfortunes, we have even gone as far as to hate each other. Well now, this same hate reached an awful state between father and Wilhelm. Of course I can appreciate that perfectly well. And perhaps it's an accident that I didn't do as Wilhelm did. So I have no grudge against him, with the restriction that I never see him. When I do see him, all my tolerance goes to the devil; then I'm rather -- rather — well, how shall I say it? Then — then I don't see anything else but the man who struck *my* father — not his, but *my* father — who struck my father in the face.

Frau Buchner.— Oh, good Lord!

Robert.— And then I can't tell what I won't do, I can't tell anything about it.

Frau Buchner.— Oh, gracious, gracious! is that true? Struck him, did you say? — in the face? — his *own* father?

Robert.— That's exactly what he did.

Frau Buchner (*half beside herself*).— Oh, good Lord, good Lord! But — then I can —then I must go right off and talk to your good old father, then ——

Robert (*thoroughly alarmed*).— Talk to whom?

Frau Buchner (*half crying*).— To your good old, poor, abused father.

Robert (*tries to hold her back*).— For heaven's sake, who is it you want to see?

Frau Buchner.— Let me go! I must, must. (*Exit up the stairs.*)

Robert (*calling after her*).— Frau Buchner! (*Turning back.*) Damned hysterical foolishness!

(*He shrugs his shoulders and walks back and forth across the room; several times he starts as if to rush after her, then changes his mind each time; finally he gives up all idea of interference and by a visible effort forces himself into a condition of apparent calmness. First he busies himself with his tobacco pipe; he taps it clean, fills it with fresh tobacco, which he takes from a pouch, lights it and seems for a minute or two completely given up to the enjoyment of smoking. Then his attention turns gradually to the Christmas tree and the presents on the table; standing before them with his legs wide apart, he surveys the scene, pipe in mouth, and laughs bitterly several times. Suddenly he starts, takes his pipe in his hand, and bends low over the table. Straightening up he seems to come for the first time to the realization that he is alone. Looking around as cautiously as a thief, he bends again, hastily seizes the yellow silk purse, carries it nearer his eyes, and with a quick, passionate motion touches it to his lips. He is evidently the prey of a secret and morbid passion. A noise disturbs him. Instantly the purse finds its*

way to its old position. Robert rises on his toes and tries to slink away. As he is passing through the side door, left, he sees his mother, who is entering through the outer door on the same side, and stops.)

Frau Scholz (*goes heavily but hurriedly across the room to the stairway door; here she stops and listens.*)

Robert (*turning back*).— Tell me, mother, what in the world is it that this woman is after?

Frau Scholz (*frightened*)— Olordolordolord! You do scare a person so ——

Robert.— What — wh — what they're af — just what the Buchners are after here is what I'd like to know.

Frau Scholz.— I'd rather know what your father — what can he be after here? Yes, tell me that! What does he want here?

Robert.— Well, I suppose you're not going to refuse to lodge him, are you?

Frau Scholz (*protesting, half crying*).— I can't see why. It was so long that he had no use for me. At least I was my own master. Now it'll all begin again, the old squabbling. I'll have to spend my old days running errands like a little child.

Robert.— You always have to exaggerate. That's the way you always are; you can't get along without it.

Frau Scholz.— You just watch him when he sees the empty hot house to-morrow. I can't keep an extra gardener just for the stuff, can I? And the ant boxes are gone too. I don't care if the flowers never grow at all; I never got anything but headaches out of them! And all the vermin! I can't see what good it all does. And I've got to be worn down by all this kind of doing. The very noise is enough to worry me to death. Oh, life isn't worth living any more.

Robert (*while* Frau Scholz *is still speaking, has started away, shrugging his shoulders; now he stops and speaks back*).—Can you remember the time when it was any more worth living?

Frau Scholz.— Can't I? Of course I can!

Robert.— You can? Well, that must have been before my time. (*Exit through the first door, left.*)

Frau Scholz (*listening again at the stairway door*).— When I think back —They're talking up there. (*She looks up, notices that she is alone, listens anxiously, and goes up at last, her hand at her ear, her face full of pain, grief, and curiosity.*)

(Ida *and* Wilhelm *enter through the glass door.* Wilhelm, *of medium*

height, powerful build, prepossessing appearance. Blond, close-cropped hair. Clothing neatly fitting, not at all foppish. Topcoat, hat, traveling bag. His left arm is about IDA'S *shoulders, her right arm is about his waist, and she draws him forward, slightly resisting.*)

Ida.— Now you're here, do you see? The worst of it is over already.

Wilhelm (*sighing heavily*).— Not yet, dear.

Ida.— You can be sure your mother will be very, very glad to see you. So will Gustie. (*She pulls off his heavy gloves.*) Where did you get these?

Wilhelm.— How do you — like them?

Ida.— Thoroughly good people, you know that yourself.

Wilhelm (*from now on more and more embarrassed with every moment, speaking slowly and as if to himself*).— Re — markable. (*His eyes fall on the Christmas tree; buried in contemplation of it, he unconsciously stops and stands motionless.*)

Ida (*unbuttoning his great-coat*).— But sweetheart! that isn't the first Christmas tree you ever ——

Wilhelm.— The first one I ever saw here, and you can't, you can't imagine — how strange ——

Ida (*drawing off the coat, while he submits mechanically*).— Please, please, Willy. (*Standing before him, the coat over her arm, his hat and bag in her hand.*) Willy! look at me! (*emphatically*) hard! (*She stands for a moment stiffly upright, then she lays the things quickly aside and returns to* WILHELM.) You — promised — me ——

Wilhelm.— Did you ever, Ida! did you ever see a funeral vault with wreaths and ——

Ida (*frightened*).— Why, Wilhelm! (*Embraces him stormily, completely beside herself.*) That's wicked! that's really wicked of you! that's very, very wicked!

Wilhelm (*pushing her back gently, struggling to repress his emotion*).— No, it doesn't do a bit of good. (*Coldly, absently.*) Very well, very well!

Ida.— Oh, oh, what's the matter with you?

Wilhelm (*studying the tree*).— Except for this, everything is just as it was before, Ida! You can be sure of that!

Ida.— I'm so afraid all of a sudden, Willy. I wonder if it wouldn't have been better. I'm sure mother didn't know that it would be so, *so* hard for you, and I — I just thought, because mother said so, I didn't really want to do it. But now — now you've gone this far, now be — listen — do it for my sake! Oh! (*She embraces him.*)

Wilhelm (*drawn a little farther by* IDA'S *arms, with signs of deep inward disturbance*).— Every step forward! Oh, what I've gone through here!

Ida.— No, don't stir it up! don't stir up the old days!

Wilhelm.—See here! It's all clear to me now. Your mother ought not have persuaded me to do it. She is always so confident, so— I knew it well enough, I told her so, but that naïve unshakable confidence of hers — I shouldn't have let it blind me!

Ida.— Oh, how hard you do take everything, Wilhelm! I'm sure you will talk differently to-morrow, when you have seen them all again. Then you will at least be justified in your own eyes. You have proved that you are seriously anxious to live in peace with your family.

Wilhelm.— When I see all this again, all the old places — everything comes out so, so distinctly, you understand! The past comes so close to me, so terribly close! I can't — I'm completely defenseless.

Ida (*embracing him, weeping*).— When I see you like this, Wilhelm, oh, you mustn't believe, you mustn't ever believe, for heaven's sake, that I would have made you do it, if I had had the slightest idea — Oh, don't ever believe that! Oh, it hurts me so to see you like that.

Wilhelm.— Ida! I must tell you, I tell you solemnly, I've got to get away from here, I must! I can't stand this thing, I can't! I'm not sure but it will ruin me forever. You're only a child, a sweet, pure child, Ida, what do you know, thank God forever and ever, you can't ever have even a suspicion of what I — what this creature beside you — I must tell you — Hate! Gall! — the minute I came in ——

Ida.— Shall we go? Shall we go away from here this minute?

Wilhelm.— Yes, for when I'm here, even you! — I can scarcely separate you from the others. I'm losing you! It makes me a criminal, just to have you here.

Ida.— If you could just be a little plainer! There must have been — something terrible must have happened here, to ——

Wilhelm.— Here? A crime! all the more horrible because it isn't called a crime. They gave me life here, and then right here they — I must tell you — I could almost say, they systematically ruined me, till I loathed the place, till I dragged around and panted under it like a beast of burden, crawled away under the burden, dug a cave for myself, buried myself alive, anything — oh, I can't tell you what I suffered, hate, rage, remorse, despair, never a minute of peace! Day and night the same goring, eating pains (*points to his forehead*) here! (*and to his heart*) and here too!

Ida.— Oh, what can I do, Wilhelm? I can't trust myself any more — to advise you at all, I'm so ——

Wilhelm.— You ought to have been satisfied, that I was so nearly

happy as I was. It ws all so beautiful, so nearly forgotten, I didn't realize till now how beautiful. (*Crushed by his emotion he drops into a chair.*)

Ida (*suppressing a cry*).— Wilhelm!

Frau Buchner (*enters from the stairs in wild haste. Rushes to* WILHELM).— Wilhelm, listen to me, Wilhelm! Remember what we agreed to do. Now, if you care anything for me, I beg — Now show — Now I order you, I command you, as the mother of my child, Wilhelm! It depends on you, now, on you alone, Wilhelm, you have done an awful wrong! You have an awful weight on your conscience. You will be happy again — I have done it, I have spoken to your father. He ——

Wilhelm (*leaps up stiffly, with staring eyes and stammering speech*).— F — father? What! W — with m — my f — father? (*He sways, staggers like a stupid person and reaches dully for his hat and coat.*)

Ida (*frightened*).— Wil — W ——

(WILHELM *gives her to understand by signs that she must not touch him.*)

Ida.— Oh, mother — Wilhelm — You shouldn't — You shouldn't have told him that — right away.

Frau Buchner.— Wilhelm! are you a man? You can't have been deceiving us. If you have a spark of love for us left, for Ida, I insist — I, a woman ——

(WILHELM *has taken up his belongings.* IDA *rushes to him, throws her arms around him, and holds him tight.*)

Ida.— You mustn't go, or I — Mother! if he goes, I will go with him!

Wilhlem.— Why — Why didn't you tell me that before?

Ida. — We haven't kept anything from you. You mustn't think as badly of us as that. We haven't kept anything from you at all.

Frau Buchner.— None of us, your mother, your sister, none of us knew anything about it, anything more about it than you did. He came a few minutes ago; without telling anybody he was coming; and of course I thought at once of ——

Wilhelm.— Who told you *that*?

Frau Buchner (*weeping, reaches for his hand*).— You did an awful, awful thing.

Wilhelm.— So you know?

Frau Buchner.— Yes, I know now ——

Wilhelm.— Everything?

Frau Buchner.— Yes, everything; and you see, I was right, I knew you were carrying something around with you. That was the secret.

Wilhelm.— You know that I ——

(FRAU BUCHNER *nods yes.*)

Wilhelm.— And Ida? Is she to be sacrificed to a creature like — like me,— a — Does she know it? Do you know it, Ida, too?

Ida.— No, Wilhelm, but, whether I know it or not; that doesn't make a particle of difference.

Wilhelm.— No. This hand that you — this hand that has often — this hand has — (*To* FRAU BUCHNER.) Is that what you mean?

(FRAU BUCHNER *nods yes.*)

Wilhelm (*to* IDA).— How shamefully I have been deceiving you! I can't bring myself to it. Later!

Frau Buchner.— Wilhelm, I know how much I'm asking, but I — You *must* humble yourself before your poor father. Not till you do can you feel entirely free. Ask him to help you! Ask him to forgive you! Oh, Wilhelm, you must do that! You must fall down before him! And if he treads on you with his foot, you mustn't resist him! Don't say a word! Be as humble as a lamb! Believe what I say, I'm a woman, and I know what is best for you.

Wilhelm.— No, you don't know. You don't have any idea what you're asking of me. Oh, you must thank God, Frau Buchner, that He hasn't shown you the horror of the thing you're insisting on. That may be pitiless. What I have done may be pitiless. But what I have gone through with — that! — what I've fought through and suffered through the horrible pain of it. He threw it all on me, and to cap the climax, this damnable crime. But in spite of it all — (*After a long, deep look into* IDA'S *eyes he fights his way to a firm resolution.*) Perhaps — I can do it — in spite of it all!

ACT TWO

(*The stage is empty. It is lighted partly by a hanging lamp in the stairway entrance, but principally through the open doors which lead into the side room at the left. A dinner is in progress there, as may be inferred from the clinking of glasses and the rattling of dishes. Enter* IDA *from the dining-room,* WILHELM *after her.*)

Ida.— At last! (*Insinuatingly.*) But you must think of father now, Willy! Don't be angry at me, but if you have something to — apologize to father for, you mustn't wait till he comes down to you ——

Wilhelm.— Do you suppose father will come down to dinner?

Ida.— Of course! Mamma has ——

(WILHELM *suddenly embraces* IDA *and presses her to himself with an impulse of wild passion.*)

Ida.— Oh — why — you — if somebody — my hair will be ——

(WILHELM *lets his arms drop limply, folds his hands, drops his head, and stands before her, suddenly sobered, like a convicted criminal.*)

Ida (*arranging her hair*).— What an enthusiastic boy you are!

Wilhelm.— You call it enthusiasm. I call it — something — very different ——

Ida.— But, Willy! why are you so cast down all of a sudden? I can't make anything out of you.

Wilhelm (*seizing her hand convulsively, laying his arm about her shoulders, draws her hastily across the room with him*).— You can't make anything out of me. Yes, that's just it — the thing I'm most afraid of is that I — that all your trouble about me will be useless. I'm so horribly changeable. (*Pointing to his forehead.*) There's never any peace back there! Everything turned topsy turvy in a second! I'm afraid of myself. Could you have any idea what it is like to be running away from yourself? Well, that's what I'm doing — been doing all my life long.

Ida.— Well, after all — but I mustn't say that ——

Wilhelm.— Tell me, please!

Ida.— Sometimes — I've thought sometimes — it's true, sometimes it has seemed to me as if — don't be angry at me — as there was nothing at all that you needed to run away from. I've felt, myself, as if ——

Wilhelm.— No, you needn't think that! Did you notice Robert, did you watch him?

Ida.— No — what did he do?

Wilhelm.— Did you notice how he met me? He knows well enough what I have to run away from! He knows me. Just ask him, he'll tell you all about it! That's what he's threatening me with. Don't you worry, sir, I know better than that. Just watch, he always looks at me! I'm expected to be frightened, and cringe before him. Ha! ha! ha! No, my dear brother, we aren't in such a bad state as all that yet. And now you can see well enough, Ida, that I can't allow that,— I mean, you mustn't cherish any illusions about me. There's only one thing for me to do, and that is to be frank with you. I must force myself to it — that's what I'm trying to do. When you know me perfectly well, if you can still stand me then — or if you — can still love me — then — that would be something gained, then something would come to me — something brave and proud, I mean, then I would have somebody, and if all the rest of them despised me ——

(IDA, *in an impulse of devotion, nestles close to him.*)

Wilhelm.— And now — and now you must — before I go up to father— You know what I mean?

(IDA *nods.*)

Wilhelm.— Now you must — I must make myself tell you what happened between me and my father. Yes, Ida, I will do it. (*Walking back and forth with her.*) It was like this! I was here on a visit — no — I can't begin that way, I must go back farther. You remember when I fought it out for a long time all alone. I've told you all about that, haven't I?

Ida.— No — but be calm, dear, it isn't necessary, don't let yourself get so excited, Willy!

Wilhelm.— Well, now, that's my trouble; I'm such a coward; I've never had the courage yet to tell you about my past. Of course I'm taking a risk when I do. I'm risking something, even with myself. No matter! If I can't even make myself do that, how can I ever reach the point of going up to see father?

Ida.— Don't do that if it's hard, dear! You have enough to suffer without it.

Wilhelm.— You're afraid of it, are you? You're afraid you will hear something ——

Ida.— No, no, you mustn't talk like that!

Wilhelm.— Well, then, you must remember that father was living up there. Till he took mother, he had lived alone, and he soon dropped back into the same way; he lived on his lonely single life. All of a sudden he turned on us, Robert and me, that is; he never paid any attention to Auguste. Full ten hours a day we moped over our books. When I see the prison hole, even to-day, it was right next his workroom. You've seen the room?

Ida.— The great hall above?

Wilhelm.— Yes, that's it. When they put us in that room, it made no difference how bright the sun shone in at the windows — it was always night for us. Well, you know how it would be, we would run to mother. We would escape from him, and then there would be a scene. Mother would pull me by the left arm, father by the right. We would keep it up till Friebe had to carry us upstairs. We fought, we bit his hands; of course that did no good, it only made our lives worse. But we remained just as obstinate as ever, and now I can see that father began to hate us. Matters reached such a state that one day he drove both of us downstairs. He couldn't endure us any longer. The sight of us was hateful to him.

Ida.— But your father — you certainly think that? — meant well by you. He wanted you to learn a great deal, like ——

Wilhelm.— Up to a certain point he may have meant well at the time — he *may* have. But when *that* happened we were only boys of nine or ten, and the meaning well ended with that. He was so far from meaning well

that he decided to ruin us completely. Yes, he did, just to spite mother. For five years we were left to ourselves with a vengeance. We were rascals and loafers. I still had something, for I happened to stumble into music. Robert had nothing. But we stumbled into all sorts of other things that I'm afraid we will never get entirely over. At last father's conscience troubled him. There were fearful scenes with mother. Finally we were packed up and taken to a reform school. And when I was unable to get used to the life of slavery there, and ran away, he had me caught and sent to Hamburg; the worthless vagabond was to be shipped to America. Naturally, the worthless vagabond escaped again. I let my family go, and starved and suffered my own way through the world. Robert has about the same record behind him. But in spite of all this we are still good for nothings in father's eyes. Some time later I was so simple minded as to demand an allowance from him — not to beg for it! I wanted to attend the conservatory. Then he wrote back to me on a post card: Be a shoemaker! This is how, Ida, we are a sort of self-made men, but we are not particularly proud of it.

Ida.— Truly, Willy, I can't help it, dear, I sympathize with you in all of it, but — I can't be serious for the moment — Don't look at me so strangely, please, please!

Wilhelm.— Oh, Ida! It's bitter. It isn't anything to laugh about.

Ida (*breaking out*).— It's a feeling of jubilation, Wilhelm! I must tell you, it may be selfish, but I'm very, very happy, that you need me so. I want to love you *so* much, Wilhelm. I see the end of it all now. But I am all confused! I'm awfully, awfully sorry for you. But the sorrier I am for you the gladder I am. Do you understand what I mean? I mean — I imagine — all that you have missed — all the love you have missed, I mean, I could make up for to you richly ——

Wilhelm.— If I could only deserve it, dear! For now comes — something — that's my affair, and nobody else's. Years ago — no — it seems — I came back to see mother, now and then, you know. Can you make it clear to yourself, Ida, when I saw all the misery over again — can you make it clear how I — how I felt then?

Ida.— You mean — your mother — suffered — a great deal?

Wilhelm.— In a good many respects I have a different idea about mother now. But, anyway, most of the fault is father's. At that time it seemed to me as if he kept mother a prisoner here against her will. I insisted that she separate from him.

Ida.— But — your mother couldn't do that, at all ——

Wilhelm.— No, and she would not listen to me. She didn't have the

courage. Now, the way I looked at father — well, you can imagine that for yourself, I suppose.

Ida.— But listen, Wilhelm! Perhaps you were not entirely just to your father. A man ——

Wilhelm (*without noticing* IDA's *interruption*).— Once I was so foolish as to invite a friend — foolishness: friend! A casual acquaintance, a musician, I brought him here with me. That was a great thing for mother. She played with him, a whole week, four-handed pieces every day. Then — Oh, it makes my blood run cold! As true as I stand before you, there wasn't a shadow of possibility! And by the end of the week the servants bellowed it right into her face.

Ida.— Please — I don't — What was it?

Wilhelm.— Mother! They said mother — they said my mother — they said — Can you believe it? — they had the brazenness to tell her openly that she — was too, too familiar with — that is, I made the girl say it — what shamelessness — she said the coachman had told her. I went to the coachman and he — he — he said —he told me the man had told him — the man himself. Of course I had no reason for believing such vile nonsense! Or, at least, I refused to till — till — I heard a — a talk — that father — had in the — the stables — in the horse stalls with the boy — and — I know you'll believe me — my hands turned to ice when I heard him talk there about my mother.

Ida.— Please don't — please let me — don't let yourself get so *terribly* excited. You're all ——

Wilhelm.— I don't know what happened then — I only know — There is something in a man — his will is a scrap of straw — A man can't help seeing a thing like that through — it was like an avalanche — It was like — and all of a sudden I found myself in father's room — I saw him. He was at work at something — I can't remember what any more. And then — I — I — with — these — with my own hands — I punished him! (*He has difficulty in holding himself upright.*)

(IDA, *her eyes are full of tears, which she wipes away. Pale and troubled, she gazes at* WILHELM, *then kisses him on the forehead, weeping silently.*)

Wilhelm.— You angel of mercy!

(*The* DOCTOR'S *voice is heard from the stairs.*)

Wilhelm.— And now — or never! (*He pulls himself together,* IDA *kisses him again. He has seized her hand convulsively. The* DOCTOR'S *voice dies away, and gay laughter is heard from the dining-room.*)

Wilhelm (*indicating the dining-room and then the staircase, on which the* DOCTOR'S *steps are heard descending*).— You and your mother have a

wonderful influence! (*A hand grasp of mutual encouragement, then* IDA *leaves* WILHELM. *Before she goes, she turns once more, seizes* WILHELM'S *hand and says,* " Be brave "; *then goes out.*)

Dr. Scholz (*still on the stairs*).— Ah, foolishness! To the right, Friebe! Ah! my elbow — don't hold me, don't hold me! Thunder!

(WILHELM *as the* DOCTOR *approaches appears more and more excited. His color changes frequently, he runs his fingers through his hair, breathes deeply, moves the fingers of his right hand as if he were playing a piano, etc. It is evident that contradictory impulses are struggling within him, that the decision is still uncertain. He seems inclined to escape, but his design is prevented by the entrance of the* DOCTOR. *He has seized the back of a chair to support himself, and stands, pale and trembling. The* DOCTOR *has stopped likewise, drawn up to his full imposing height, and gazes at his son with a look which expresses successively fear, hate, and contempt. The room is silent.* FRIEBE, *who has entered also, supporting the* DOCTOR *and holding a light for him, slinks away into the kitchen. There are physical signs of a struggle in* WILHELM. *He tries to speak, but his throat refuses to produce a sound, and he does no more than move his lips noiselessly. He takes his hand from the back of the chair and walks toward his father. He walks unsteadily, he sways, he seems on the point of falling, he tries to speak again, but is unable to utter a sound; he drags himself a little farther and falls with folded hands at his faher's feet. In the* DOCTOR'S *face have been visible, first hate, then astonishment, growing sympathy, alarm.*)

Dr. Scholz.— Boy — my dear boy! My —(*He tries to lift him by the hands.*) Please stand up! (*He seizes* WILHELM'S *head, which hangs limp, and turns it toward himself.*) Look at me, boy, look at me, please. What's the matter — with ——

(WILHELM *moves his lips.*)

Dr. Scholz (*in a trembling voice*).— What — What — are you saying to me? I ———

Wilhelm.— F — father — I ——

Dr. Scholz.— What — do you mean?

Wilhelm.— I — hav — I have h — h ——

Dr. Scholz.— Foolishness, foolishness! Don't talk any more about such ——

Wilhelm.— I've committed — a crime — against you ——

Dr. Scholz.— Foolishness, foolishness! I don't know what you're driving at. Bygones are bygones. Do me the favor, boy ——

Wilhelm.— But — take it from me! Take the burden from me!

Dr. Scholz.— Forgiven and forgotten, boy! forgiven and forgotten ——

Wilhelm.— Thank you. (*He takes a deep breath and falls unconscious.*)

Dr. Scholz.— Boy! What's this you're doing? What ——

(*He lifts the body and drags it to the nearest armchair. Before he has arranged it, enter* IDA, ROBERT, AUGUSTE, FRAU SCHOLZ, *and* FRAU BUCHNER *hastily from the dining-room;* FRIEBE *from the kitchen.*)

Dr. Scholz.— Wine! Bring some wine, quick!

(IDA *goes out and returns at once with wine.*)

Frau Scholz.— Olordolordolord! Water! Throw some water over him, right away!

(DR. SCHOLZ *pours wine down his throat.*)

Auguste.— What was the matter?

Ida (*pale and in tears, lays her cheek against* WILHELM'S).— He feels as cold as ice.

Frau Scholz.— What was it stirred the boy up so, I'd like to know? It all seems perfectly ——

Robert (*seizing her hand and interrupting her reprovingly*).— Mother!

Frau Buchner.— Use some water, use some water, Doctor!

Dr. Scholz.— Pshaw, pshaw! Have you — have you any *eau de cologne?*

Frau Buchner.— Yes. (*She gives him a bottle.*) Here is some.

Dr. Scholz.— Thank you. (*He spreads the liquid over the young man's forehead.*)

Ida (*to the* DOCTOR).— It isn't — oh, I hope it isn't so! but — (*She breaks out into sobs.*) Oh, he looks so terrible, he looks just as if he were— dead.

(ROBERT *comforts* IDA).

Frau Scholz.— How the boy's sweating! (*She wipes his forehead.*)

(WILHELM *yawns.*)

Dr. Scholz.— Pshaw! (*He and all the rest study* WILHELM *in suspense.*)

(WILHELM *clears his throat, stretches himself, opens and closes his eyes like a person drunk with sleep, and lays his head back as if falling asleep again.*)

Dr. Scholz (*aloud*).— Thank God!

(*He straightens up, wipes his forehead with his handkerchief and studies his surroundings with emotion and something of embarrassment.* IDA *has thrown her arms about her mother's neck, laughing and crying at the same time.* ROBERT *stands with folded hands, repressing his emotion with difficulty, and looking in turn at the others.* AUGUSTE *walks up and down, her handkerchief held tight against her mouth, and every time she passes she stops a moment before* WILHELM *and gazes at him earnestly.* FRIEBE *goes out on tiptoe. The* DOCTOR'S *glance meets his wife's. She approaches him timidly and earnestly, takes his hand quietly, and touches him on the back.*)

Frau Scholz.— My dear!

(AUGUSTE, *following her mother's example, embraces aud then kisses her father, who submits unresponsibly, without taking his hand from his wife's.*)

Auguste (*her arms about his neck*).— My dearest father!

(ROBERT, *with a sudden resolution, steps up to his father and shakes his hand.*)

(FRAU SCHOLZ *releases the* DOCTOR'S *hand and leads* IDA *to him.*)

(DR. SCHOLZ *looks first at* IDA, *then at* WILHELM, *and casts an inquiring glance at* FRAU BUCHNER.)

(FRAU BUCHNER *nods.*)

(DR. SCHOLZ *makes a motion which seems to say: I see nothing against it, although I'd rather not commit myself. Then he holds out his hand to the girl.*)

(IDA *approaches him, takes his hand, bends over it and kisses it.*)

(DR. SCHOLZ *draws his hand back quickly, as if frightened.*)

(WILHELM *sighs deeply. Every one is startled.*)

(AUGUSTE *in the dining-room door, makes a sign to* FRAU SCHOLZ, *then exit.*)

(FRAU SCHOLZ *makes signs to the* DOCTOR, *indicating that it would be better to go into the next room and leave the patient.*)

(DR. SCHOLZ *nods assent, and goes away carefully, hand in hand with* FRAU SCHOLZ.)

FRAU BUCHNER (*who has indicated to* IDA *that she must stay with* WILHELM, *goes into the next room also.*)

Robert (*softly*).— Fraulein Ida, would you — would you want to let me watch a while now?

Ida (*joyfully surprised*).— I'd be glad to! (*Presses his hand, then exit into the dining-room.*)

(ROBERT *draws a chair near* WILHELM'S *and sits down, his eyes on the sleeper as he does so. After a while he draws a pipe out of his pocket, and makes preparations to light it, but remembers the patient in time, and puts it away again.*)

(WILHELM *sighs, stretches out his limbs.*)

Robert (*softly and cautiously*).— Wilhelm!

Wilhelm (*clears his throat, opens his eyes in astonishment, and says after a while, as if* ROBERT'S *call had just reached his consciousness*).— Yes?

Robert.— How do you feel now?

Wilhelm (*after he has looked thoughtfully at* ROBERT *for some time, in a weak voice*).— Robert? Isn't it?

Robert.— Yes, it's me, Robert. How are you now?

Wilhelm.— All right. (*Clears his throat.*) I'm very well — now. (*He smiles in a constrained fashion and makes a feeble effort to rise, which fails.*)

Robert.— No, no! It's a little bit too soon for that, isn't it?

(WILHELM *nods yes, sighs, closes his eyes in exhaustion.*)

(*A pause.*)

Wilhelm (*opens his eyes wide and speaks calmly, softly, but distinctly*).— Just what was it happened? Here?

Robert.— I think, Wilhelm, it will be best not to discuss it at present. I can assure you of one thing: it was something — I at least would never have supposed it was possible.

Wilhelm (*enthusiastically*).— Nor I, either.

Robert.— How could a fellow — oh, pshaw! Nobody would have guessed it in a thousand years! But it happened, all the same.

Wilhelm.— Yes — now I remember — more and more — it — was — beautiful! (*His eyes fill with tears.*)

Robert (*with a slight trembling in his voice*).— A fellow gets to be a sentimental old woman. Well, there's this much certain, now. We've had the proposition all wrong. We didn't know the old man. It's clear enough we didn't know what we were doing.

Wilhelm.— Father? No! We are all — *so* blind, *so* blind!

Robert.— Yes — the Lord knows! — we are that ——

Wilhelm.— How strange it all seems! How wonderful! He loves us! The old man is good at heart!

Robert.— It looks as if he might be, and I never had any idea of it till now.

Wilhelm.— I'm beginning to see all sorts of things!

Robert.— As far as reasoning the thing out is concerned — you know — I had it settled a long time ago. Everything just happened to work out the way it did. I never held father responsible, that is, I haven't for years. Not for what happened to me, nor for any of us. But to-day I've *felt* it; and you know that's a very different thing. My word of honor, it's unbalanced me completely. When I saw him like that — anxious about you — it struck me like a thunderbolt. And now I keep asking myself: Why didn't we see it, why in the world didn't we? It's all come out now, so it must have been *in* us — why didn't it break out before? In father, in you — and in me; good Lord, why didn't it? It was in us, sure enough! And he swallowed it all down in himself. Father, I mean — yes, and we did, too, for so many years ——

Wilhelm.— I see how it is now; a person not only turns a different side to everybody he meets, but he is actually different to each person ——

Robert.— But why must that be so between us? Why must we always and forever repel each other?

Wilhelm.— I'll tell you: We're not warm-hearted! Now take Ida, for example! This way of thinking you've figured out is perfectly natural to her. She never sits in judgment. She's instinctively tender and gentle toward everything. That's what wins, you see! That — and I believe that's ——

Robert (*rising*).— How do you feel now?

Wilhelm.— I'm perfectly comfortable now ——

Robert.— Pshaw — what good does all this do? Why, I mean — I mean — of course *you* may come out all right!

Wilhelm.— You think so?

Robert.— Yes. You and — and Ida, of course.

Wilhelm.— I hope so. They have such an influence, both of them. Frau Buchner has, too, but Ida has more. I've been hoping that could save me. At first I struggled against it ——

Robert (*thoughtfully*).— They certainly have! They have an influence and that's why, at first — to be frank with you, I was envious of you.

Wilhelm.— I saw that well enough.

Robert.— Well, you see, I heard about an engagement, and then I saw Ida. She ran up and down the stairs and sang so cheerfully, without an idea of ——

Wilhelm (*rises*).— I understood it all well enough; I couldn't hold it against you, of course.

Robert.— Of course not! And now, well now, I've got to be different — I've got to be good, as I said, the way things have come out. So you're all right now?

Wilhelm.— Perfectly well.

Robert.— Then you'll come in pretty soon?

Wilhelm.— As soon as — you go on with the others!

Robert.— All right! (*Starts away, comes back.*) Let me tell you, I can't help it, I owe it to you, your whole conduct, toward father, and everywhere, was very honorable. I jumped on you, like a brute, with my cursed stupidity. Well, devil take it all! This is the first time in a long while that I've felt such an imperative impulse to kick myself all over town. Does that satisfy you now? Well, you'll have the kindness to — if I — well, I've been insulting you once a minute ever since you came. And — I'm sorry for it! Do you hear that?

Wilhelm.— Brother! (*They shake hands, greatly moved.*)

Robert (*quietly takes his hand out of Wilhelm's, pulls out his pipe, lights*

it, puffs a few times, saying to himself as he does so).— Can't a fellow's soul turn somersaults, though — pff! pff! Strange thing. (*Turns and starts away again. Before he opens the door of the dining-room he turns back and calls over his shoulder to Wilhelm.*) I'll send her out to you!

Wilhelm.— Oh, well, you needn't do that! All right, if you ——

(Robert *nods and vanishes through the door.*)

(Wilhelm *takes a deep breath of relief. He is beaming visibly.*)

Ida (*comes out of the dining-room, rushes into his arms*).— Willy!

Wilhelm.— Now — now, you, the two of you — you two angels have got me free. Now, a brand-new life. It seems to me as if I've grown twice as big! Oh, you dearest! I never knew till now what a terrible weight it was on me! And now I'm strong! I'm strong, dear! You can depend on it, I'll win out now! I'll show him what the good for nothing is worth! I'll show father what I can do. I'll show him there's something living in me; there's power, there's art, and people shall bow before it. The stiffest heads will bend, I feel it! I've been tied, that's all! My finger tips are itching this minute. I want to create, I want to do something!

Ida.— I knew it, I knew it! Now you've found yourself at last. Dearest, I'd like to shout for joy. I'd like to shout and sing. See, I was right; there's nothing dead in you! It was just asleep. It will all wake up again in time, I kept telling you. It has waked up, you see now!

(*They embrace and kiss each other, and walk up and down the room with their arms around each other, speechless with happiness.*)

Wilhelm (*stops, gazes into the eyes of his bride in a sort of blissful amazement, then lets his glance rove around the room.*)— In these ice-cold vaults, how enchantingly happy it is! (*They kiss again, and walk on in happy silence.*)

Ida (*sings softly, with roguish reference to something in the past, as if implying*).— Now, you see I was right:

When the pleasant linden tree
Blooms again,
Comes the old spring dream to me ——

(Frau Scholz *enters, sees the pair, and starts hastily back.*)

Ida (*who has seen her, interrupts her song, and rushes to her*).— Don't run away, mother!

Frau Scholz.— Oh, but I must! What do you want of me?

Wilhelm (*embraces and kisses his mother, and helps* Ida *bring her back*).

Frau Scholz (*petulantly*).— You aren't careful enough. You're — you're tearing something ——

Wilhelm.— Oh, well, mother! that doesn't make any difference. Mother! You see another man before you. (*Between mother and bride, holding a hand of each.*) Come, my dear old mother! Look each other in the eyes! There, take hold of each other's hands!

Frau Scholz.— Foolish boy!

Wilhelm.— Kiss each other!

Frau Scholz (*after she has wiped her mouth with her apron*).— Ah, you stupid fellow! That — there isn't any use of that — you don't need me for that, does he, Ida? (*They kiss each other, laughing.*)

Wilhelm.— And now we'll have peace!

Frau Scholz.— Don't boast too soon, my boy!

(FRIEBE *carrying a smoking punch tureen, comes from the kitchen, and goes into the dining-room.*)

Wilhelm.— Oho! There it is. Friebe, is it good?

Friebe (*as he passes*).— Ah, you can put all of the stuff before me you please. I never touch none of it.

Wilhelm.— Impossible, Friebe!

Friebe.— I used to, I know. Now I'm sworn off long ago. Now I don't drink nothing — most of the time — but bitters. (*Exit.*)

Ida (*has arranged* WILHELM'S *cravat and straightened his coat*).— There you are ——

Wilhelm.— Thank you, dear! Is father in a good humor?

Frau Scholz.— He's telling such strange stories. Half of the time you can't understand him at all.

Wilhelm.— My heart's beginning to hammer again!

Frau Scholz.— If Robert just didn't drink so much.

Wilhem.— Oh, mother! To-day — to-day it doesn't make any difference! To-day ——

Ida.— Well, come in quick now, before you— —

Wilhelm (*to* FRAU SCHOLZ).— Will you go with us?

Frau Scholz.— You go in first!

(IDA *and* WILHELM *go into the dining-room.*)

(FRAU SCHOLZ *stands thoughtfully stroking her forehead, and following a sudden impulse, goes and listens at the dining-room door.*)

Friebe (*enters through the same door. It is evident that he is tipsy*).— Frau Doctor!

Frau Scholz.— What do you want?

Friebe (*cunningly mysterious*).— It's mighty strange, Frau Doc — tor 'em.

Frau Scholz (*retreating*).— You've drunk too much. You ——

Friebe.— I've been awatchin' all I could — I could and — and I wanted to tell you a secret.

Frau Scholz.— Yes, yes, yes! Tell ahead, what you've got to say.

Friebe.— Well, I just mean ——

Frau Scholz.— Go on, Friebe, go on!

Friebe.— I just mean — it ain't just the thing. In this here b — bisness there's a great lot of things that I mustn't blab. I just mean yer *man*, he can't make it much longer ——

Frau Scholz.— Oh, gracious, gracious, Friebe! You mean he has — Oh, gracious: Has he been complaining? Is he sick, do you mean?

Friebe.— Well, about that — I don't know nothing about that!

Frau Scholz.— What's the matter with him, then?

Friebe.— Why, I shouldn't —hadn't ought to say.

Frau Scholz.— Is it something serious? (FRIEBE *nods solemnly*).— He hasn't been talking about dying?

Friebe.— He's done — more'n that — he's settled his business and his holdin's, but ——

Frau Scholz.— Well, tell me what you mean, can't you? The fellow's so drunk ——

Friebe (*angrily*).— Yes, I — well, gardner and shoemaker and whatever happens to come along — no, no! I don't have to do everything comes along, that ain't my bisness. I did before, but I won't no more, there's the whole thing — clear — point! (*He wheels around and goes into the kitchen.*)

Frau Scholz.— The man's gone crazy.

Ida (*enters by the second door into the dining-room, closing it behind her. Opening it a little again, she calls back into the room*).— Wait, ladies and gentlemen! Wait patiently and obediently!

Wilhelm (*following her*).— I want to help you.

Ida.— Well, you and nobody else!

(IDA *and* WILHELM *light the candles on the Christmas tree.*)

Frau Scholz.— See here! Listen! Wilhelm!

Wilhelm (*busy with the lights*).— In a minute, mother! We'll be ready in a second.

(*The tree, the chandelier, and the stairway light are all lighted.* IDA *removes a great cloth which was spread over the presents on the table.* WILHELM *approaches his mother.*)

Ida (*calls through the dining-room door*).— Now!

(FRAU SCHOLZ *is about to tell* WILHELM *something, when she is in-*

terrupted by the entrance of DR. SCHOLZ. *He is followed, in this order, by* AUGUSTE, ROBERT, *and* FRAU BUCHNER).

Dr. Scholz (*face heated by drinking, with affected astonishment*).— Ah! Ah!

Frau Buchner.— Like a fairy story!

(AUGUSTE *smiles, with some constraint.*)

(ROBERT *walks around the room, pipe in mouth, with a smile that is at first embarrassed, then more and more ironical.*)

Ida (*has led* WILHELM, *who is visibly moved by the scene, to the place where his presents are lying*).— Don't laugh at me, Willy. (*She offers him the purse.*)

Wilhelm.— Why no! Ida! I asked you not ——

Ida.— I knit it for father. The last year before his death he carried it a great deal. Then I thought ——

Wilhelm (*with rising embarrassment, under the eyes of the others*).— Yes, yes, very well, thank you very much, Ida!

Robert.— The things ought to be more practical.

Frau Scholz (*led to the table by* FRAU BUCHNER).— But what's all this about? I can't do anything — I haven't anything for you (*before a knit cloth*)— no, no, now you — please don't! Did you knit that for me? Now, did you, for an old woman like me? Well now, I'm very thankful to you. (*They kiss.*)

Frau Buchner.— And I'm very, very glad, if you like it.

Frau Scholz.— Splendid! Wonderful, beautiful. How much time and trouble! Well, now!

Ida.— And I have something for you, too, Herr Robert! Only you mustn't laugh at me!

Robert (*turning red to the roots of his hair*).— Ah, what's that for?

Ida.— I thought your tobacco pipe is going to burn your nose pretty soon, and so I took pity on you, and yesterday, I went out in a hurry. (*She produces a new pipe, which she has been holding behind her back, and offers it to him.*) There's the work of art!

(*General merriment.*)

Robert (*without taking the pipe from her*).— You're joking, Fraulein!

Ida.— Well, yes! But the giving it to you is bitterly serious.

Robert.— Oh, no, no! I can't believe it!

Frau Scholz (*in an exasperated aside to* WILHELM).— Robert is *unendurable!*

Ida.— No, I'm not joking, really!

Robert.— Well, now, you see — this thing here — I've got used to it — pshaw, and you're just joking, anyway!

Ida (*her eyes full of tears; mastering her annoyance, in a trembling voice.*) — Well, all right, as you please. (*She lays the gift back on the table.*)

Frau Buchner (*has called to* IDA *softly several times during the conversation; now she rushes over to her*).— Ida, dear, have you forgotten?

Ida.— What, mamma?

Frau Buchner.— Oh, you know. (*To the others.*) Now you'll hear something.

(IDA, *glad of this opportunity to conceal her emotions, follows her mother, who has seized her by the hand, into the adjoining room.*)

Frau Scholz (*to* ROBERT).— Why did you spoil her pleasure for her?

(WILHELM *walks nervously up and down, chewing the ends of his moustache, and now and then casts a threatening glance at* ROBERT.)

Robert.— What's that? How's that? I haven't any idea what you're talking about.

Auguste.— Well, it certainly wasn't exactly kind of you.

Robert.— Let me alone! How could I help it, anyway?

(*A song with piano accompaniment, sounding from the next room, interrupts the speakers. All look at each other in astonishment.*)

(IDA'S *voice.*)

Oh, come, little children,
  Oh, come, one and all!
Oh, come to the manger
  In Bethlehem's stall,
And see, in this holy,
  This blessedest night,
What the Father has given
  To bring us delight!

(DR. SCHOLZ *has grown more and more displeased at* ROBERT'S *behavior. At the beginning of the song he looks shyly around, as if he feared an attack, and tries as unostentatiously as possible to place a certain distance between himself and all the others.*)

Frau Scholz (*at the beginning of the song*).— Ah, how beautiful! (*She listens eagerly for a moment, then breaks out into sobs.*)

(ROBERT, *when the song begins, moves slowly away, with a face that seems to say, This is more than I can stand, smiles ironically and shakes his head several times. As he passes he says something in a low voice to* AUGUSTE.)

(AUGUSTE, *considerably disturbed before, breaks out into an angry exclamation.*)

(WILHELM, *a prey to contradictory emotions, has been leaning against the table, nervously drumming on it; now his face flushes angrily.*)

Robert (*seems toward the end of the song to be suffering physically from the sound. The impossibility of remaining free from its influence seems to torment him, and to embitter him more and more. Immediately after the conclusion of the stanza he delivers himself involuntarily, as if it were a fragment of an inner monologue, of the words*).— Childish tomfoolery! (*in a biting and contemptuous tone.*)

(*Everybody, including the* DOCTOR, *has heard the words, and they all stare at* ROBERT *in horror.*)

Frau Scholz, Auguste.— Robert!

(DR. SCHOLZ *checks an impulse of violent anger.*)

(WILHELM, *pale with rage, takes several steps toward* ROBERT.)

Frau Scholz (*rushes in front of him, embraces him*).— Wilhelm! For my sake, for my sake!

Wilhelm.— Very well. For your sake, mother!

(*He walks around the room struggling with himself. At this moment the second stanza begins. Scarcely have the first tones reached his ear, when he comes to a decision, as the result of which he starts toward the door of the side room.*)

He lies in the manger,
  The dear little boy;
While Mary and Joseph
  Gaze on Him with joy.
The good simple shepherds
  Are kneeling in love:
A chorus of angels
  Floats joyous above.

Frau Scholz (*steps in his way*).— Wilhelm! What are you going to do?

Wilhelm (*in an outburst of indignation*).— I'm going to have them stop singing.

Auguste.— Are you crazy?

Wilhelm.— Never you mind! I say, they shall stop singing.

Frau Scholz.— But be a little — You're certainly the — All right then, you'll not see *me* any more this evening.

Robert.— Don't go, mother! Let him do it, if he wants to! It's his own private affair!

Wilhelm.— Robert! Don't carry this thing too far! Take my advice! You played the sentimental act a while ago, and that makes you all the more disgusting to me now.

Robert.— That's a fact. Sentimental act. I'm of the opinion ——

(WILHELM *starts for the side room again*).

Frau Scholz (*stopping him again*).— Oh Lordolordolord, child, why must you? The second stanza is finished.

Wilhelm.— Because the whole gang of you aren't worth it.

Robert (*stepping close to* WILHELM, *with a defiant, significant look in his eyes*).— But perhaps *you* are?

Frau Scholz.— Oh, my Lord, you must stop it! (*The third stanza begins.*)

The glad shepherd children
With faces so brown,
Bring milk, butter, honey,
To Bethlehem town;
A heaping fruit basket
All glowing and red,
A shining white lambkin
With flower-crowned head.

Wilhelm.— They must stop!

Frau Scholz (*holding him again*).— My boy!

Wilhelm.— It is simply too shameful for words. It's blasphemy! It's a crime against those two, for us to listen to them. I — I swear it makes me blush with shame for the bunch of you!

Auguste (*piqued*).— Well, now, I guess we're not so much wickeder and more contemptible than everybody else, after all.

Wilhelm.— Auguste! It turns my stomach to think of it!

Auguste.— All right, very well, I see you've broken out again, just the same as ever. You've got something to complain of about your sister at every crook and corner. Now this isn't right, and now that isn't right. But Fraulein Ida ——

Wilhelm (*beside himself, interrupting her*).— Don't speak that name again!

Auguste.— Well now, I guess I can speak about Ida ——

Wilhelm.— Leave that name alone, I tell you!

Auguste.— Have you gone raving mad? I guess I can. I tell you she's no angel from heaven, either.

Wilhelm (*shrieking*).— Be still, I tell you!

Auguste (*turning her back to him*).— Oh well, you're just in love, that's all.

Wilhelm (*seizing* AUGUSTE *roughly by the shoulder*).— See here, woman, I ——

Robert (*seizing* WILHELM'S *arm, speaks coldly, bringing each word out distinctly*).— Wilhelm, are you going to do the same thing again?

Wilhelm.— The devil!

Auguste.— Have you got anything to say? You? who raised your hand against your own father?

Dr. Scholz (*in a voice trembling with anger, in a tone of absolute command*).— Auguste! Leave the room! this minute!

Auguste.—Well now, I'd like to know ——

Dr. Scholz.— You will leave the room this minute!

Frau Scholz.— Oh, my good Lord, why don't you take me to yourself? (*In a half-weeping tone.*) Auguste! Do you hear! Obey your father!

Robert.— Why, mother! She shouldn't do anything of the sort. She's no child any longer. Times have changed, by the Lord they have!

Dr. Scholz.— But I haven't changed. I'm the master in this house. I'll show you that!

Robert. —Ridiculous!

Dr. Scholz (*shrieking.*)— Rob — ber and mur — derer! I — disinherit you! I'll throw you out in the street.

Robert.— This is simply comical.

Dr. Scholz (*conquers a fearful outburst of anger, and speaks with ominous calmness and firmness*).— You or I, one of us leaves the house this moment.

Robert.— I, of course, and I shall be very glad to do so.

Frau Scholz (*half commanding, half entreating*).— Robert, you must stay.

Dr. Scholz.— He goes.

Frau Scholz.— Fritz! Listen to me! He is the only one — in the long, long years he hasn't forgotten us, he ——

Dr. Scholz.— He or I ——

Frau Scholz.— Give up this time, Fritz, for my sake!

Dr. Scholz.— Stop that! He or I!

Frau Scholz.— Oh, you needn't have anything to do with each other, as far as I'm concerned; it can be arranged all right — but ——

Dr. Scholz.— Very well, I give in. I give in to you and your pack. You and your pack, you've won the victory for good!

Wilhelm.— Don't go, father! Or if you do go, let me go with you this time!

Dr. Scholz (*drawing back involuntarily, between anger and horror*).— Don't bother me, vagabonds! (*Hunting blindly for his effects.*) Thieves and loafers, wretched vagabonds!

Wilhelm (*with an outburst of indignation*).— Father! And *you* dare call us that! And it was you who made us that. No, no, father, I didn't mean to say that! Let me go with you, I will stay with you, let me make up for all I have —— (*He has laid his hand on his father's arm.*)

Dr. Scholz (*as if paralyzed with horror and disgust, draws heavily away*). — Let me loose! I tell you — the schemes of my persecutors are going to come to — I'm sure — to come to grief. Are these the people, these mighty folks — and are these mighty folks men? A man like me, who is partly to blame, but anyway is entirely — and — through and through, and short and simple ——

Wilhelm.— Father! Father! Oh, my dear father! Try to collect yourself, try to think where you are!

Dr. Scholz (*swaying to the rhythm of the words, softly*).— Short and simple — through and through ——

Wilhelm (*embracing him, in an instinctive effort to stop the motion*).— Try, father, try to think!

Dr. Scholz (*pushing at him, like a little child*).— Oh, don't hit me! Oh, don't punish me!

Wilhelm.— For God's sake, father!

Dr. Scholz.— Don't hit me! Don't — hit — me again! (*He makes convulsive efforts to free himself from* Wilhelm's *arms.*)

Wilhelm.— May my hand rot off, dear father, you mustn't believe — father, you mustn't think ——

(Dr. Scholz *frees himself and starts away, followed by* Wilhelm.)

Wilhelm.— Strike *me! You* strike *me!*

Dr. Scholz.— Please, please, please — help!

(Ida *appears in the door from the side room, pale as death.*)

Wilhelm (*catches up with his father, embraces him anew.*)— Oh, *you* strike *me!*

Dr. Scholz (*in* Wilhelm's *arms, collapses into a chair*).— I — ah — ah! I — think — it's all over — with— me!

Wilhelm.— Father! ! !

(Frau Scholz *and* Auguste *have fallen in terror into each other's arms.* Robert, *as pale as death, has not moved: but his face bears an expression of invincible determination.*)

Act Three

(*It is nearly dark in the hall. All the lights have been extinguished except one or two in the chandelier and one on the Christmas tree. Forward, near the stove, by the table, his back to the side room, sits* Wilhelm, *his elbows on the table, evidently buried in a heavy, comfortless revery.* Robert *and* Frau Scholz *enter the hall at the same time, coming from the dining-room.*)

Frau Scholz (*apparently exhausted, speaks in subdued tones*).— Well, boy! Don't talk about it! Now — I don't know, I don't know. It's awful, but what good will it do?

Robert.— You aren't alone, mother!

Frau Scholz.— But do you mean — you can't be in earnest, you surely can't! It's an awful thing! Where in the world will you go in the middle of the night?

Robert.— If that were the worst of it! There's a train every few minutes, and I must leave here! This time I simply can't stand it — anyway, it's the best thing for all of us.

Frau Scholz (*in her whining tone*).— It's been so nice in these last years! Oh, I tell you, we must have them back again. Since the Buchners have been here everything has been all turned around, everything.

Robert.— You ought to be glad you have them, mother!

Frau Scholz.— Oh, I could have done it all myself, very well.

Robert.— I suppose he won't let any of us come near him — Father?

Frau Scholz (*weeping*).— It's just as if I had done him some harm. And yet, I have always been just the same. I know I've always done my best — now tell the truth, Robert, I've always cooked the things he liked to eat — he's always had his warm stockings ——

Robert.— Now, don't talk like that, mother! What's the use of always complaining?

Frau Scholz.— You can say what you please! It's very nice to talk, but when I've worn myself out all my life long, when I've racked my brains to find out how and how to do things the best, and here come strangers in, and step in before me!

Robert.— Is Ida still with him?

Frau Scholz.— An utter stranger. Oh, I'd rather die right here! And this rascal! This Friebe! — this rascal! How he gives himself airs! But Gustie put it to him! Auguste told him the truth to his face, all right! This fellow's getting too bold, he hustled her right out of the room. The girl was crazy. And she's his own daughter — no — oh, dear, dear, what I've stood in my life! I hope nobody else will ever have to stand as much.

Robert (*involuntarily, with a slight sigh*).— So has father.

Frau Scholz.— What?

Robert.— Nothing. So has father, I said.

Frau Scholz.— What do you mean?

Robert.— Why, father has stood a good deal, too.

Frau Scholz.— Well, it hasn't been my fault if he has. He never worried much about me. I'm sure I haven't troubled him.

Robert (*skeptically*).— Well now — well now ——

Frau Scholz.— Just wait, when I'm laid in my grave — then you'll see, all right ——

Robert.— Oh mother, don't begin that! I've heard that a hundred times already.

Frau Scholz.— All right! You'll find out all right — just remember, and pretty soon, too.

Robert.— Oh, mother, I don't deny that you've suffered a great deal from father; but you've both suffered. I can't see why you keep telling me.

Frau Scholz.— Foolishness! What did I ever fail to do for him, *I'd* like to know?

Robert (*without hesitation*).— If you're absolutely determined to know: You failed to understand him!

Frau Scholz.— I can't pretend to be wiser than I am.

Robert.— Nobody ever asked you to be that. But — oh, it's rank foolishness to keep on talking about it now!

Frau Scholz.— Well, stop it then (*weeping*). Now I suppose it's all my fault that he lies sick there, now ——

Robert.— I didn't say that, at all.

Frau Scholz.— Yes, you *did* say that.

Robert.— Oh, mother! I'd better go — I — mother, I simply can't ——

Frau Scholz.— No! I want to know — what I have to reproach myself with. I have a good conscience.

Robert.— Well, I hope you'll keep it then! May the Lord help you keep it, is all I have to say! (*protesting.*) Now, please don't let's say any more!

Frau Scholz.— I suppose you mean about the money?

Robert.— I don't mean about anything.

Frau Scholz.— My father and mother worked hard to earn it. What woman would have stood it any better than I did? Your father just threw it out of the window.

Robert.— Your uncle cheated you out of it.

Frau Scholz.— We don't know that.

Robert.— And father could earn as much as that ——

Frau Scholz.— Yes, and lose it all in speculation.

(ROBERT *laughs bitterly.*)

Frau Scholz.— I know I'm a simple creature. Your father was too high toned for me. His mother was high toned, just like him. But my father had been as poor as a church mouse. I've got the poverty blood in me! I can't make myself over different. Oh, well, the few years will go past soon enough. The Lord will set me free in His good time.

Robert.— You'd better wish to be set free from the Lord!

Frau Scholz.— Horrors! Nobody but a rascal would say that. Oh — set free from the Lord, then I'd take a knife and stick it into me, here into my heart, into my ribs. What an awful thing that would be, to be set free from the Lord! What would have happened to me if I hadn't had my Lord! Well, are you really going away, Robert?

Robert (*on the stairs*).— Oh, be still, mother! I need rest — rest. (*Exit.*)

Frau Scholz.— Lord, yes! Lord, yes! You make an old woman's life hard enough! (*To* WILHELM, *who all through the scene has been brooding at his table, and has paid no attention to the conversation.*) Well, what do you think of that? Robert wants to go away!

Wilhelm.— Well, let him go!

Frau Scholz.— Tell me, what are you sitting like that all the time for? That doesn't do any good, child! Try to be reasonable!

Wilhelm (*sighs deeply*).— Yes, yes!

Frau Scholz.— It don't do any good to sigh! Just look at me! I'm an old woman. If I sat down the way you're doing. What's done is done. There's no use trying to change it now. Listen! Read something! Get up and get a book and distract your mind!

Wilhelm (*sighs*).— Oh, mother! Let me alone, please! I'm not disturbing anybody! Is Friebe back from the doctor's?

Frau Scholz.— No, not yet. That's what I always say, whenever you need a doctor, there's never any to be had.

Wilhelm.— It's serious, isn't it? Oh, I wonder if there will be another attack?

Frau Scholz.— Lord, yes! who knows!

(WILHELM *stares at his mother, and suddenly breaks into a wild sob, and lets his forehead fall on his hands.*)

Frau Scholz.— Yes, yes, my boy; who would have thought of that happening? I don't mean to say — I don't want to throw the guilt on anybody, but to-day of all days you didn't need to begin quarreling again. Well, we must always hope for the best. At least his mind isn't wandering any

more. If Ida just doesn't make a mistake. Some of the rest of us have had a hundred times more experience. How can he be so friendly to Ida? I guess I don't want to bite him! Of course Ida's a nice girl, she is that. And you, my boy (*tapping him on the head*), you can thank the good Lord,— you might wait a long time before you found another one like Ida! (*Cautiously, confidentially.*) Tell me, Wilhelm, are the Buchners well fixed?

Wilhelm (*irascibly*).— Oh, don't bother me! How should I know that? What difference does that make to me?

Frau Scholz.— Well, what have I done? I guess a person can ask a question, you cross bear, you!

Wilhelm.— Oh, mother, have mercy on me! If you have a spark of pity for me — let me alone! Don't bother about me — let me alone!

Frau Scholz.— Yes, yes, that's the way it always is — I'm always in the way. An old woman like me isn't good for anything but to browbeat.

(AUGUSTE *and* FRAU BUCHNER *enter hastily from the side room.*)

Auguste.— Mother!

Frau Scholz.— Oh, Lord! What is it?

Auguste.— Friebe's come back.

Frau Buchner.— Friebe didn't bring a doctor with him.

Auguste.— Father asked him, and then he said ——

Frau Buchner.— He doesn't want a doctor!

Auguste.— He's swearing horribly — he says he'll throw him outdoors.

Frau Buchner.— Friebe won't go again.

Auguste.— You go and talk to Friebe!

Frau Buchner.— Yes, you go and talk to him! It's absolutely necessary that ——

Auguste.— We must have a doctor. I'll go myself if he won't. I'm not afraid, even if I have to walk to Friedrichshagen.

Frau Scholz.— Oh, what a thing to say! Now, in the middle of the night. Just wait, wait — let me fix it! (FRAU SCHOLZ, FRAU BUCHNER, *and* AUGUSTE *return hastily to the side room.*)

(FRAU BUCHNER *has scarcely disappeared, when she returns again. Before she went out, she turned her eyes furtively and anxiously several times toward* WILHELM, *who sits silent and gloomy by his table. A glance tells* FRAU BUCHNER *that there is no one in the room but herself and* WILHELM. *Hastily at first, then with increasing hesitation, she approaches* WILHELM.)

Wilhelm (*who has noticed her approach, raises his head*).— What do — do you want? I told you all about it before.

Frau Buchner.— But I wouldn't believe it — I couldn't think it could be true.

Wilhelm.— And now — do you believe it?

Frau Buchner.— I — don't know ——

Wilhelm.— Why don't you tell me the truth? Tell me — right out — yes. It had to come out like this — it was all so ridiculously natural. How could I ever have let myself be blinded so?

Frau Buchner (*with feverish zeal*).— Wilhelm! I think now, as I always thought, that you're a good, noble man. I swear to you that I never doubted you for a second. Even now, though I'm so anxious and afraid ——

Wilhelm (*rises and takes a violent inspiration, as if he had difficulty in breathing*).— It seems to me now — I've known it for a long time, and yet ——

Frau Buchner.— I come to you, Wilhelm, I say to you frankly — it's come over me all of a sudden. I'm so horribly anxious about Ida.

Wilhelm.— I must make a confession, but just now ——

Frau Buchner.— I know well enough you love the child. Nobody could love her any more dearly than you do! I know you will try with all your might to make my daughter happy. You will not lack the will, but now — now there have been so many things — now I've seen so much here, and heard so much. Now a great deal — a great deal of what you told me before I have just come to understand. I didn't know you. I thought you were a pessimist. A great deal of what you said I didn't take seriously at all. I came here with a firm, cheerful faith. I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself. I thought I would do wonders. I would guide such natures — weak, foolish I! Now I'm losing all my faith. I'm feeling all at once my fearful responsibility; I'm responsible for my child, for my Ida. Every mother is responsible for her child. Speak to me, Wilhelm! Tell me everything is going to be all right, after all! Tell me we will be happy! You and Ida will be happy. Prove to me that I have no need to be afraid or anxious, Wilhelm!

Wilhelm.— Why have you let it go so far? I warned you and warned you. What did I say to you? I said this: All of us, the Scholz family, are incurably diseased, that I'm the worst of all, that we're hopeless wrecks. Don't bind your daughter to a cripple, I've said to you. Why wouldn't you believe me?

Frau Buchner.— I don't know. I don't know, myself.

Wilhelm.— And you put me to sleep, you silenced my conscience. And now — I've been half mad with happiness. I've lived through moments, tasted them, and then others, the most terrible battles of my life, and now you want — now I must try — perhaps, perhaps ——

Frau Buchner.— Wilhelm, I honor you. I know that you are ready for

any sacrifice. But Ida — if it is too late for her — if it is more than she can stand!

Wilhelm.— Why weren't you willing to believe me? You don't know what it costs me now. I struggled and built myself up step by step — oh, it was so hard! so hard! This house here lay behind me. I was almost saved. Now I've been sucked into it again. Why did you have to let it come so far? Why ——

Frau Buchner (*in tears*).— I don't know! I don't know anything about it! I raised the child. She was everything to me; to work for her happiness was my only calling on earth. Then you came into our home. I came to like you. I thought of your happiness, too, I — perhaps I shouldn't have done it. Perhaps I thought a great deal of *your* happiness, and, who knows? — at last, too much of *your* happiness. (*For a moment the two gaze in terror into each other's eyes.*)

Wilhelm.— Frau Buchner!

(Frau Buchner, *covering her face with her hands as if overcome with shame, goes out weeping through the stairway door.*)

(Wilhelm *instinctively takes several steps after her, tries to master his emotion, but falls suddenly against the wall, shaken with sobs.*)

Ida (*her face is pale, her manner very serious and anxious. She steps softly to* Wilhelm, *embraces him and presses her cheek against his*).— Oh, Willy! Listen: sad days come and then — isn't it so, Willy? Bright days come again. You mustn't let yourself be so — so utterly and completely crushed.

Wilhelm (*stammering passionately*).— Ida! My only dear! My dearest! Sweet, how can I — how could I even live without you? Your voice, your words, your whole sweet, wonderful self, your hands, your kind, true hands ——

Ida.— And what about me? Do you think I want to live without *you?* No, sweetheart! We will put our arms around each other and not let go — tight — tight — and as long as we're like that ——

Wilhelm.— Yes, yes! But suppose we can't stay so?

Ida.— Oh, don't talk like that!

Wilhelm.— I only mean — you can never tell — one of us might die——

Ida.— Oh, but we're young.

Wilhelm.— That doesn't make any difference. It will have to come at last. I'm sure I'll not live to be very old.

Ida (*hotly*).— Then I'll put my arms around you, then I'll press up close to you, then I'll go with you.

Wilhelm.— Ida, people say such things. But you won't do that.

Ida.— I will do that!

Wilhelm.— You think you will now. You don't know how quickly people forget.

Ida.— I couldn't breathe without you!

Wilhelm.— You just imagine so ——

Ida.— No, no, no, Wilhelm!

Wilhelm.— To love like that would be pure foolishness. You don't want to stake everything on one card.

Ida.— I don't understand you exactly.

Wilhelm.— Well, it's I — see here. (*In a tone of exasperation.*) Ah, Ida, the theme is inexhaustible! How is father?

Ida.— He's asleep now, but why, what's the matter with you?

Wilhelm (*walking about*).— I have these moods. I don't know why. (*Suddenly gnashing his teeth.*) There are times, I tell you — when I'm mad and desperate, and can't control myself — when I'm like this it seems as if I could throw myself down five stories, head first, to the pavement; the idea is really a tempting one.

Ida.— Gracious, how terrible! You mustn't let yourself think of such things, Willy!

Wilhelm.— Why shouldn't I, I'd like to know? Why should such fellows as I sponge our way along between heaven and earth? Useless creatures. To put ourselves out of the way, that would be something, then we'd be doing something useful at least once.

Ida.— Of course it isn't to be wondered at. You're excited and unnerved.

Wilhelm (*in a rough, disdainful tone*).— Let me alone, you don't understand what I'm talking about! (*Frightened at himself, suddenly changing his manner.*) Oh, dearest! You mustn't be hard on me. You'd better go now! I don't want to hurt you. And feeling as I do now, I can't go bail for myself.

(IDA *kisses* WILHELM *silently on the mouth, then goes into the side room.*)

(WILHELM *looks after her, starts in the same direction, stops, shows a face full of fear and astonishment, and grasps at his head like one who has caught himself in evil thoughts. In the mean time* ROBERT *has entered from the stairs.*)

(ROBERT, *his hat in his right hand, his overcoat and a traveling rug over his arm, in his left hand a shawl strap, walks to the table and deposits his effects on it.*)

Wilhelm (*looks at him, and after he has studied him a while*).— Where are you going?

Robert.— Away.

Wilhelm.— Now?

Robert.— Why not? (*Spreading out the shawl strap.*) I've had enough. and good measure, even! Mother will in the future — in the future have to celebrate the Christmas holidays without me. (*Looking around at the stove.*) It's cold here.

Wilhelm.— It's freezing cold outside.

Robert (*rolling up the rug*).— There! It was thawing at ten.

Wilhelm.— There's a change in the weather.

Robert.— How can I get down the hill on the ice?

Wilhelm.— The moon's shining!

Robert.— Even if it is ——

Wilhelm.— He isn't out of his head any longer.

Robert.— Is that so?

Wilhelm.— He doesn't want a doctor.

Robert.— So?

Wilhelm.— It came so suddenly, I ——

Robert.— Hm — yes, yes!

Wilhelm.— It must have been coming on before.

Robert.— Of course. If it hadn't been he wouldn't have come home-——

Wilhelm.— It's horrible! How will it end?

Robert.— What can a person do?

Wilhelm.— My soul, I don't know what I can do, if he dies. With what I know! With what I've learned this time! I don't know how — and now there's the remorse too, the stings of conscience. O! What do you think? What is the thing to do, after all?

Robert.— Oh, my boy! You'll have a lot to do if you try to straighten things out. The old man is a little different — that's true — our idea wasn't exactly right. But, Lord, that doesn't change matters at all.

Wilhelm.— I tell you, and I'm in dead earnest about it — I'd be glad to give up my whole wretched life if I could give his back to him.

Robert (*pulling on his overcoat*).— That isn't very sensible, my boy — in my opinion. Now, see here, I'm headed for a nice, warm little office, where I sit down with my back to the stove, cross my legs under the table, light up this same pipe here, and write, in all calmness of mind, it is to be hoped, such, well, you know, such jokes, such advertising jokes: traveler in Africa, at the point of death, you know, and then I generally have a caravan come, laden with the article we sell. My boss is very well satisfied; it goes through the advertising columns of as many newspapers as possible; and the principal thing is, when I sit like that, you know, and hear the gas flame

spitting above me all day long — from time to time a glance into the court — the court of a factory like that is a wonderful thing, really! A romantic thing, I tell you! Well, there's no bumble bee bothering me there.

Wilhelm.— I'd rather be dead.

Robert.— Matter of taste! For me it's the ideal corner of all corners. Has a man got to be thrown off his balance all the time, has a man got to be driven crazy? I'll need a matter of two or three days to get back the little philosophy of life I'm able to command.

Wilhelm.— You can say what you will; *I* call that cowardly.

Robert.— All right, call it so if you like. But sooner or later you'll come round to my point of view. Father came round to this point of view at last, too. Father and you are nearly enough alike, so that you might take one for the other. You're the same sort of idealist. In the year '48 father started out on the barricades, and he ends up as a lonely hypochondriac. The thing to do is to get used to the world and yourself in *time*, boy! Before you sow your wild oats.

Wilhelm.— Or else go to work on yourself to make yourself different.

Robert.— Catch me doing that! I am what I am. I have a right to be what I am.

Wilhelm.— Then come out and demand your rights like a man!

Robert.— I'll take care not to do that, because I want to *get* my rights. The moral Philistines are for the present in the majority. Well, I must go now — so — if you'll take my advice, look out for the so-called good resolutions!

Wilhelm (*coldly*).— What do you mean by that?

Robert.— Simply this. You mustn't try to do things that your whole natural bent make impossible for you.

Wilhelm.— For example?

Robert.— Well! For example there comes to my mind a lot of fellows who drive me mad chattering about ideals. We must fight for human ideals, and all that stuff! I must fight for others! Fabulous assumptions! And for what and to what? Now I know you, and I know you're in trouble; you feel like slinking around like a thief. What a wretched scoundrel I am, you want to keep saying to yourself. Am I not right? Well, pretty soon you'll come to a good resolution, and they weigh a fellow down, I know that. I used to stagger around with a hundred different brands of good resolutions on my back — did it for years — and it's no fun, *I* tell you!

Wilhelm.— I don't understand exactly what you're driving at.

Robert.— I haven't anything perfectly definite in mind; the uneasiness that's troubling you now — has other causes, I know. For my part, at

least, when I used to notice, I've gone through the same sort of thing in the past, but as soon as I noticed that the business was more than I could handle, I generally came to a sudden decision and turned my back square on it.

Wilhelm.— And that's a suggestion, is it?

Robert.— Suggestion? I don't know. Well, once more, treat yourself well and ——

Wilhelm.— Tell me now, very definitely, it has a certain interest for me — it is only because ——

Robert.— Well, what do you want me to tell you?

Wilhelm.— You said something yourself a while ago ——

Robert.— When?

Wilhelm.— When we were talking about father.

Robert.— Oh, yes, I remember — what did I say then?

Wilhelm.— You said things might turn out all right for Ida and me.

Robert.— Oh, yes, your love affair. Did I say that?

Wilhelm.— You said that.

Robert.— Well, yes, I said a number of things then.

Wilhelm.— I suppose that means — you have backed out of a number of things you said then.

Robert.— That's right, I have.

Wilhelm.— But as for — this special thing?

Robert.— Your love affair?

Wilhelm.— Yes.

Robert.— Is it a very important thing to you?

Wilhelm.— Yes, perhaps.

Robert.— Yes.

Wilhelm.— So you don't think any longer — that we ——

Robert.— No.

Wilhelm.— Very well — thank you. You are frank — thank you. But suppose — suppose I turn my back on the whole thing — let's say nothing about what that would mean to me — suppose we say I go off with you right here — what would happen to Ida then?

Robert.— How — Ida? (*Shrugs his shoulders.*) Hm, yes, yes, that isn't so easy, that is, well, I wouldn't worry about that very much.

Wilhelm.— Robert! You're as tricky as ever. Just as you always were.

Robert.— Tricky? What do you mean? No, you're entirely mistaken! I'm not interested enough to be tricky — in this matter, I mean. Really, now, I don't believe ——

Wilhelm.— I know better, I tell you. You don't think you know

more about this girl than I do? It's a fact — you can be sure of it — she has a certain feeling for me, and I can't help it. I'm not boasting about it at all. Now what will become of her if I go off?

Robert.— How — is it really troubling you to know?

Wilhelm.— Of course, yes, of course.

Robert.— Well, now please tell me first — suppose you marry, what will become of Ida?

Wilhem.— That's more than anybody on earth can tell.

Robert.— Oh, yes, they can! Everybody knows: Mother.

Wilhelm.— As if Ida were anything like mother!

Robert.— Or you anything like father.

Wilhelm.— Every person is entirely different from every other person.

Robert.— You'd be very glad to believe that, wouldn't you? Let the thing drop! You're asking too much of yourself. You're the incarnate contradiction of your own theory.

Wilhelm.— What do you mean by that?

Robert.— Why, you know well enough.

Wilhelm.— But a man can work out of a thing.

Robert.— If he has had the proper training, that is.

Wilhelm.— Oh, there's no use talking any more.

Robert.— Exactly my opinion.

Wilhelm.— It isn't getting us anywhere. (*Indignantly, losing control of himself.*) You want to ruin me! I'm sacrificed to a plot! You've sworn an oath against us, you're trying to wreck me! You're trying to ruin me!

Robert.— That's what father got to saying.

Wilhelm.— It's ridiculous. What you say is simply ridiculous! Haven't I right to say that — aren't you trying to separate me from Ida? It is — to tell the truth — I haven't the words, it's such monstrous presumption, such brutality, it's simply beyond all comprehension! I'm to have mercy on Ida! Who's having mercy on me, I'd like to know? Name him, if there's any one! Who is there?

Robert.— Of course! If you take it like that, of course!

Wilhelm— You're asking me to make a sacrifice. Without the slightest preparation I'm to make the craziest sacrifice you ever heard of! I'm to ——

Robert.— Cheer up, and save your words. Of course, under the circumstances, you have a perfect right to hold on to the girl.

Wilhelm.— Under the circumstances? Under what circumstances, pray tell me?

Robert.— You were talking about Ida, a moment ago, I remember ——

Wilhelm.— Yes — well — what?

Robert.— Now you're talking about yourself. I didn't mean to say anything — well — in one word, if you don't care what happens to the girl — if you have the requisite amount of, well, let's say, ruthlessness in your makeup, if you take her, like a new coat or hat, or something like that ——

Wilhelm — Robert! Absolutely heartless as you are, you're right this time. I'll go with you — away — not far — and then — then I'm through with all of you. Yes, yes, I am, don't say a word — now I'm through for sure — absolutely ——

(ROBERT *looks at him in astonishment, and then shrugs his shoulders.*)

Wilhelm (*with increasing violence*).— See here! Don't trouble yourself, you can't do it, you can't deceive me with your innocent calmness. You're right, I admit, but the thing that has brought you to the right thought, I say it to your face, is the wretchedest envy. It's simply miserable jealousy. You know very well that I would make an honest struggle to become in some measure worthy of her at last. You know very well how this girl is purifying me with her purity. But you don't want that to happen! You don't want to know that I'm purified. Why don't you? Just because you've got to stay, yourself, just as you are, because she loves me and not you! And that's the reason you've watched me the whole evening with your detective eye, you've given me to understand over and over that you know something about me — all right! You're entirely right! I'm vicious through and through. There isn't a particle of purity in me any more. Black as I am, I don't belong with such innocence, and I have determined not to commit a crime. But you, Robert! All this doesn't make you any cleaner; it's a good thing for you that you no longer have any sense of shame!

(ROBERT *during the last third of* WILHELM'S *speech has taken his things and started toward the door. The knob in his hand, he stops as if he would speak, changes his mind, shrugs his shoulders resignedly, and goes quietly out.*)

Wilhelm (*calling after him*).— Robert! Robert!

Ida (*enters from the side room*).— Whom are you calling?

Wilhelm.— Oh — you're here!

Ida.— The doctor's in there, Wilhelm — he says it's very serious, it ——

Voice of Frau Scholz (*wailing*).— My dear, good husband, oh! oh, my dear, good husband!

Wilhelm.— What have I done? What have I done now?

Ida.— It breaks my heart. I'd like to — not ask you, I — but there must be something — there's something the matter with you, Willy!

Wilhelm.— There's nothing at all the matter with me. I'd like to go off and be alone again. There's where I belong, Ida.

Ida.— Why? I don't understand at all.

Wilhelm (*roughly and violently*).— Yes, yes, yes! That's the old song— I don't understand you. I don't understand you! Mother and father have been talking different languages all their life long; you don't understand me! You don't know me! You have the flat ideas of an ignorant child, and so I have nothing to do in the future except to conceal myself from you, to hide and hide, till I'm nothing more than a miserable deceiver and scoundrel.

Ida (*has been looking at* WILHELM *in amazement; now she begins to cry.*)

Wilhelm.— Now you see. This is my real face. And I need only forget for a moment the part I'm playing before you, and it shows up again. You can't endure my real face. You're crying, and you'd cry for years, if I didn't take pity on you. No, Ida, there must be nothing between us. I've come to a firm decision.

Ida (*throwing her arms about his neck*).— That isn't true! That can never be true!

Wilhelm.— Think of what you've seen here! Shall we start another household like this? Shall we start this establishment over again?

Ida.— It will be different! It will grow better, Wilhelm!

Wilhelm.— How can you say that?

Ida.— I *feel* it.

Wilhelm.— But you're throwing yourself headlong into destruction, Ida! I'm dragging you to destruction!

Ida.— I'm not afraid. I'm not at all afraid of that, Wilhelm! Take courage again! Just give me your hand again! Then I'll be able to say something to you — don't push me away from you — I won't cry any more, I promise you ——

Wilhelm.— Let me go! You're loving for the first time! You love an illusion. I have thrown myself away, again and again. I am a scoundrel. I am an outcast.

Ida (*embracing him in an ecstacy of weeping*).— You are mine! You are mine!

Wilhelm.— I am not worthy of you!

Ida.— Oh, don't say that! Before you I'm small, oh, how small! I'm only like a little, little moth. Wilhelm, I'm nothing without you! I am everything with you. Don't pull your hand away from me — poor me!

Wilhelm.— Ida! I from you? Ida, I? (*They embrace and kiss each other, between laughing and crying.*) *I'm* not to pull my hand away from *you?* Yes, what do you say now, you bad ——

Ida.— Now, you'll promise me now ——

Wilhelm.— I'll swear it, now— (*A terrible cry from the next room interrupts her. Startled and frightened* IDA *and* WILHELM *stare into each other's eyes.*)

Voice of Frau Scholz.— My husband—is dying! My good, dear husband, he's dying — my husband — (*loud weeping*).

Wilhelm.— Good God! God! What? Father! ! Father! ! (*Rushes toward the side room;* IDA *stops him half way.*)

Ida.— Wilhelm! Come to yourself! And don't go without me!

(FRIEBE *comes from the next room, shaken with sobs, and vanishes into the kitchen.*)

Auguste (*comes close on* FRIEBE'S *heels. Stopping before* WILHELM, *she drags out the words with difficulty*).— Who is to blame for this? Who? Who? (*She falls against the table and leans upon it, groaning in a strange dull and hollow fashion. The loud weeping of* FRAU SCHOLZ *is heard constantly.*)

Wilhelm (*bursts out violently*).— Auguste!

Ida (*on* WILHELM'S *breast, calming him, in a trembling voice*).— Wilhelm, I believe your father is gone.

(WILHELM *burst out again, is calmed by* IDA, *fights down his agony, seeks and finds* IDA'S *hand, which he presses convulsively in his, and goes toward the side room, hand in hand with the girl, erect and composed.*)

POE AND WHISTLER

By Harriet Monroe

BETWEEN Poe and Whistler, the two finest artists, each in his province, that America has yet produced, there is a close spiritual kinship. Whistler was much the more fortunate of the two: first, in having a sense of humor; second, in not having a hereditary love of drink; third, in being born twenty-five years later into a less opinionated age; fourth, in escaping from his provincial America of the mid-nineteenth century into a world more aware of art; and fifth, in living long enough to fight his battle to a finish and enjoy his triumph. Whistler accomplished more; his genius was more prolific, of broader range and of more human quality than Poe's was, or, perhaps, had a chance to be. Poe lacked some of Whistler's weapons, notably the sharp wit which drew blood from the Philistines, and he was heavily handicapped by the disease whose attacks made him half insane, and finally killed him at little more than half the age Whistler fortunately reached. Moreover, his imagination leaned toward sombreness and Whistler's toward gayety. One is tempted to believe that Whistler had the larger vision and was the greater man of the two, because he stood to his guns, cheerfully endured siege after siege, led many a dashing sortie, and finally 'made good,' carried his point with the reluctant world, and died victorious. But who shall balance the ifs and measure success and failure? Who can tell which is the abler soldier — he who wins his long fight against heavy odds and plants his banner high on the crest of the citadel, or he who leads a forlorn hope and falls with the flag, overwhelmed by numbers and treachery?

More important than apparent success or failure is the cause a man lives for and the work he does in loyalty to it. In these two lives the cause was the same — the austerity of beauty and the reticence of art. Whistler may have been quite ignorant of Poe; neither of them invented the principle. But in their time it was revolutionary, and loyalty to it, or indeed to any artistic ideal beyond the crude taste of the crowd, meant a perpetual struggle. Both men abhorred sentimentality and crudity, and delighted in artistry, that clearness of line and delicacy of touch which chooses and eliminates and refrains. To such a temperament the fatuous facility of 'Evangeline' and of Royal Academy painting was anathema, and the wonder is, not that

Whistler vented his righteous wrath in irony, but that Poe could remain courteous in exposing the prosiness of Longfellow's alleged dactylic measures. Poe's criticism of the poetry of his day remains in its essence sound, and his essay on the 'Rationale of Verse,' written thirty years before Sidney Lanier's great book, was the first sure word ever uttered in English on the subject. But he was firing in the air; his missiles flew far over the head of the solidly intrenched New England School. And he did not live long enough, as Whistler did, to gather the ' fit audience though few ' together, and watch it grow into a world.

Poe did not live to down his enemies; and even now, strangely enough, a hundred years after his birth, and nearly sixty after his death — even now they are strong enough to deny him justice. We still hear, in the echoes from the centennial comments, that old familiar note of personal dislike and temperamental enmity, shrill insistence of the naggings and denials which irritated the poet almost to insanity and kept him miserably poor throughout his life, which slandered his memory and would have liked to stamp out his fame. Since Emerson obliterated him as ' the jingleman,' and Lowell considered it beneath his dignity to have a controversy with him, a curious antagonism between Poe and the truly authoritative among his fellow-countrymen has persisted even into the twentieth century. And as no superior person can ever be a fair judge, as the last word about a man and his work must always be said in sympathy, his fame still appeals for justice ' to man's charitable judgments, to foreign nations and the next age'; Poe's rather carping fellow-countrymen do not yet pronounce the verdict of time.

We feel this antagonism in Mr. Brownell's elaborate analysis, which tries so hard to say all that it says nothing; which turns a cold light upon Poe's poor misguided genius, studies it from all possible points of view, and so covers it with contradictory tickets and labels as to obscure it altogether. We feel it still more strongly in Mr. Howells's article, in which a kindly man makes a desperate effort to be generous, but cannot help betraying temperamental antipathy at every step. Poe is an immortal, he decides, by virtue merely of one entire poem and two lines besides; and his best tales, though conceded to be ' the work of a master,' would not win admission to-day into the sacred pages of our magazines. The unconscious humor of this verdict, which is intended as a criticism of the tales and not of the magazines, its delicious ascription of supernal wisdom to the modern editor, is perhaps inevitable after a lifetime spent in the editorial atmosphere. But not inevitable is the grudging tone of whatever praise he accords the poet's work, praise as eager and happy as though extracted by a surgical

operation; still less the bitter severity of his estimate of the poet's character.

Poe has always been unlucky in his biographers; at best they have been cold and distant, as if ashamed to make friends with a person of habits so irregular. But the first of them, Griswold, was slanderous both in his statements and his omissions. The lies and exaggerations which he offered as facts to satisfy some obscure unconscious malice still prejudice Poe's fame; yet it is surprising to hear Mr. Howells, in his benign old age, saying that Poe was 'insanely made up of weakness, pride, viciousness, cruelty, and tenderness.'

Now what is the basis of this heavy indictment repeated by three generations of the people whose æsthetic perceptions Poe did so much to quicken and inspire? Pride and tenderness may be admitted as fundamental in his character; also certain obvious and superficial weaknesses, combined, however, with a profound strength, the strength of an inevitable loyalty to a disprised ideal. But how and wherein was he vicious or cruel? True, he drank to excess, and the occasional sprees of his youth developed, through those later years of privation and bereavement and despair, into a heavy slavery to the dark hereditary mania. But why should this evil habit, battled against to the bitter end, a habit which modern science calls a disease rather than vice, earn for the poet that very complete little adjective,'vicious'? Other men of letters have drunk to excess, even the amiable and admirable Addison, whom generations of school children are taught to revere. Burns drank himself to death, and clogged his genius with other vices which the more delicate nature of Poe shunned with Puritanic austerity. But we do not, for this reason or greater reasons, dismiss these men as 'vicious.' Most of us, with Poe and Burns, lapse into vice, fall and fight, conquer or are conquered; but he only is vicious who prefers vicious practices, who loves evil and has a contempt for good.

And this over-emphasis of Poe's weaknesses is not balanced by any mention of his virtues. We hear nothing of the 'uniform gentleness of disposition and kindness of heart,' which, even in so cold a biography as Professor Woodberry's, are testified to by a score of the poet's friends. Mrs. Osgood's description is typical of many. 'It was in his own house,' she says, 'that his character appeared in its most beautiful light. There he was playful, affectionate, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child. Even in the midst of his most harassing literary duties he had, for his young, gentle, and idolized wife, and for all who came, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention.' Poets'marriages are not always pleasant reading — how forbearing the world has been in spreading a mantle of charity over the marital failures of Shelley, Byron,

Burns, Coleridge, even the lofty-minded Milton! Why, then, do we hear so little of the devotion of Poe and his frail little child wife through the ten years of their marriage? They were poor, but their little cottage home was simple and beautiful, and 'she idolized him.' There was 'never an impatient word,' even when the poverty became wretchedness, even when there was not enough food and fire for the dying woman, and her husband had to nurse her night and day, and spread his great-coat over the meager blankets on her bed. Is this cruelty and viciousness? Is it even the heartlessness of which we hear him accused? How many poets, how many men, though born without Poe's craving for drink, could endure a strain like this for months, for years?

But enough of all this; it makes one impatient to have to defend Poe's private character against his censorious fellow countrymen. His loyalty to his invalid wife was typical of a more heroic loyalty in him which is more our affair, and of which we hear no mention. He kept his intellectual integrity; he was unflinchingly true to his ideal of art; he fought and starved for it in a world which had not the remotest idea of what he meant or what he was trying to do. In those arid eighteen forties, banished for life, with his passionate love of the inner subtleties of beauty, to a 'poor little vainglorious, self-distrustful country, still abjectly provincial,' Poe fought the same battle which Whistler waged so gallantly to a happier end. Whistler, keenly American as he was by temperament, had to cross the ocean to gain even a reluctant hearing, even a mocking response; his own country was still too barren of art — who can imagine him achieving anything through the heroic din and turmoil of the civil war? Poe never found his way to the cosmopolitan world of which he was born a citizen, never, except in extreme youth, had the chance to cross the sea; and even if he had reached Europe with his message his time was out of joint, not yet ready to understand him. He was obliged to fight blindly, and with increasing sorrow and bitterness, a battle in the air; while the great and wise of his day, that firmly intrenched group up in New England, looked on smilingly, as from a height, unmoved even to scorn until the Quixotic swordsman dared point a thrust at Longfellow.

Yet if we may estimate a man's genius by its fecundity, which of all those Bostonians may stand with him? Even Emerson, the wise and gentle and noble, proves not, on the whole, such a modern; to-day he is not so intensely and passionately alive as this jingle man he despised. Mr. Brownell says, 'We cannot imagine American literature without him'; and we have clouds of witnesses, from Baudelaire to Conan Doyle, to prove him the only American writer whose power has been fruitful in other lands

and tongues. As Whistler had his way with modern graphic art, compelling the painters and etchers of our time and later times to follow the trend of his footsteps, or at least to feel in their veins the quickening influence of his blood and fire, so, to a somewhat less degree and in a narrower sense, Poe has influenced literary art and clarified its ideals. His battle in the air dispersed clouds and put demons to flight. We perceive, as his contemporaries did not, that it was fought for certain inviolable principles of beauty, which had been obscured and ignored; the same principles, essentially, of which Whistler, in his ' Ten O'Clock,' a full half century later, so brilliantly reminded the British Philistine world.

If Poe's spirit listened to that lecture, how he must have rejoiced! ' Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress.' ' She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach.' ' Beauty is confounded with virtue!' ' As the laws of their art were revealed to them (the artists) they saw, in the development of their work, that real beauty which, to them, was as much a matter of certainty and triumph as is to the astronomer the unification of the result, foreseen with the light given to him alone. In all this, their world was completely severed from that of their fellow-creatures with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry; and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves.' The voice was Whistler's, but Poe must have risen from his unquiet grave to join the ghostly company of masters who inspired it. Here across the tides of time, was his comrade, his fellow-workman, abler, more efficient than he, and of a happier star.

Thus there is a familiar ring in Miss Edith Thomas's long arraignment of Poe as ' a master mechanician.' He *was* a master mechanician, as every artist should be, and if Miss Thomas can see nothing more in him, so much the worse for Miss Thomas. Hers is the old familiar minor-poet attitude, that also of the forgotten minor painters who flung similar epithets at Whistler, for these ladies and gentlemen have always been sentimentalists. One must wear one's heart on one's sleeve to persuade them that one has a heart; they detect no ' feeling ' in a feeling for pure beauty, no ' tenderness ' in reticence from unmelodious clamor.

Is there no feeling, no tenderness in

" Helen, thy beauty is to me,"

or in

" I heed not that my earthly lot,"

or

" Thou wast that all to me, love,"

or ' To My Mother,' or the second ' To Helen,' or the ' Dream Within a Dream,' or ' Annabel Lee,' or ' Israfel,' or ' El Dorado,' or the lightly touched ' Romance ' and ' Fairyland ' ? Each of these perfect poems is inspired by feeling too profound to need over-emphasis and too exquisite to indulge in it; feeling in no haste to display the roots it springs from, but reserved *until* it blooms into a flower.

Now and then a string of Poe's harp is strained, more rarely it breaks, as in the case of every master who keeps an instrument of rarest quality at concert pitch. Now and then we detect the artificial note of virtuosity rather than the pure clear tone of art. ' The Raven,' for example, is rather deliberately overwrought, the extravagant playing of a master whose hands outrun his theme for once, who indulges his skill with a passionate joy. ' The Bells,' of course, makes no higher pretense than this, is frankly a virtuoso's happy exercise in verbal felicities — a tour de force, like a Paganini cadenza, in whose gay abandon of ingenuity all the world delights with the artist. But in the small volume of Poe's verse mere virtuosity is rare; in fact, the most subtle beauty of his art is its instinct for stopping short of precise perfection, of that mechanical rigidity of form which is so essential to the mere technician. Here again the parallel with Whistler holds. The best of Poe's poems are like the Venice etchings — masterpieces of arrangement, of luckily contrasted light and shadow, with figures suggested, half outlined, against backgrounds emerging in beauty from the universal mystery; and all expressive of that feeling which is of all feelings deepest in the heart of man, the delight in life, the commanding sense of its beauty and tragedy, the passion to share in its great creative processes, to leave some record of a phase or two of its elusive, evanescent charm.

Poe's verse, in short, has the magic touch. He had an instinct for words as fine as Whistler's for line, an instinct which always baffles analysis, always puzzles, often even enrages the square-toed critic keen for faults and sure of rules. To read his poetry is to bathe in limpid waters by moonlight or sunlight, to sift pearly sands on the shore of an infinite sea. The sands are a mere handful, the waters a mere pool in a forest, the poems mere love songs or little ecstasies of grief or joy, but the magic makes of these trifles the very essence of the elements, the stuff out of which worlds are builded and hearts are born, the mystery through whose far free spaces dreams take flight.

THE INSPIRATION OF CRASHAW

By Edward J. O'Brien

CRASHAW will never be popular in his appeal. The few elements in his poetry which make for popularity are counterbalanced by the love of conceit, which at first amuses, and then repels, the casual reader. Yet there must be some great merit in the man whose poetry has attracted the eager attention of men with such diverse temperaments as Milton and Pope, Shelley and Coleridge, Francis Thompson and Coventry Patmore. Let us endeavor to comprehend an attraction which is so potent, and see what we can find in Crashaw's poetry to inspire an 'Ode on the Nativity' and a 'Christabel.'

His sacred poems breathe a passionate fervor of devotion, which manifest itself in imagery of a richness seldom surpassed in our language. There is an hysterical intensity of conviction in them, which was accentuated, no doubt, by the reaction from the cold religious atmosphere of his boyhood to the fervid Anglicanism of Cambridge, reflected in such a novel as 'John Inglesant.'

Even the early work of the poet, though clearly written in conformity to the traditions of 'the tribe of Ben,' has an indefinable touch of color which we vainly look for in the poetry of Jonson. Its exaltation and unearthliness reflect the influence of Nicholas Ferrar and his household, spurring the young enthusiast to emulation of this shining example of sanctity and single-heartedness.

We feel that this poetry is poetry of ecstasy and devotion, not of experience and meditation. There is no such self-analysis as we find in reading Herbert or King or Donne. There is naught but the flame-colored seraph of worship. His poetry is such as St. John of the Cross might have sent to St. Teresa. Melodious rapture is sustained to an unprecedented degree. We read the magnificent apostrophe to St. Teresa, with a sense almost of suffocation. This 'thirst of love,' these 'large draughts of intellectual day,' these 'brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,' leave us exhausted with an unsatisfied strain of aspiration, 'too full for sound and foam.'

Both Crashaw and St. Teresa are love's victims, and the sacrifice is the holier because its consummation is so long drawn out. If, as Coleridge, I think, somewhere says, the first ebullience of his imagination was given

unshapen into form, yet the mental labor continued for long afterward; the gold did not emerge pure from the furnace till it had been long tried; and much, even, never came out untainted by the consciously wrought conceits which mar the poet's most deeply felt work. If there is a dazzling intricacy and affluence in refinements, there is also a compensating sweetness in artistry, a choice subtlety, a mastery of supple and cunning implication.

Crashaw's metrical effects, though often magnificent, are very unequal. This seeking after effectiveness sometimes produces a grotesque diffuseness which is very far from the simple tenderness of Herbert, for example. Indeed the poet's ardent study of the Spanish mystics seems to have induced a morbidly hysterical delight in blood, and in the details of martyrdom.

Often again every extravagance and inappropriate image conceivable are dragged in to eke out a small idea. This habit of diluting a thought or line until all its force is lost is exemplified in Crashaw's opening poem, 'The Weeper,' of which the eccentric commencement must have driven many a timid reader away from the poet forever.

Yet if we read on a little way we meet with a sweetness of diction and purity of fancy which is equalled by few and excelled by none. We soon begin to feel that here is the soul of a man revealing to us, if we will but listen, the heart of humanity, flooding us with the beauty of the spirit, full of flying color and lambent flame. We are reminded vividly of Shelley and of Swinburne, of their virtues and their faults, and we say instinctively, 'Here is a man whom they have read with their hearts, and translated into their own flowing harmonies.' We have here with us the great Shelley, the great Swinburne, the great Crashaw of the fiery surprises.

This naked poetical ardor, only found previously in Marlowe, though of the most ethereal impulse, is yet equipoised throughout with the most imperial and imperious structure. Meter and diction are plastic to a shaping spirit of inevitable righteousness, the spirit of a premeditating angel.

The fire of Crashaw's fancy is none the less tempered by a human and lover-like tenderness, itself tinged by that *Weltschmerz* which is all pervasive in the work of the world-worn poet. This *Weltschmerz*, however, never degenerates into mere sentiment, but is the expression of a lofty nature looking with a pity untinged of bitterness on the unfeeling world about him.

Dignity indeed is one of his characteristic traits, and no matter how profuse his ornament may be, it is nearly always subordinate to the moral effect. We feel this dignity most in his noble ode to St. Teresa, the ode which Coleridge admits to have been the inspiration of 'Christabel.'

This ode is an exquisite composition, full of real vision and music of the most delicate order. If it is marred here and there by puerile conceits, these conceits are simply virtues that have overshot their mark.

Conceit reaches its highest level in 'Music's Duel,' a brilliant and unique attempt to express quality and variety of musical notation in words. If this constant trifling seems hard, dull, and laborious elsewhere, here it leaves us delighted by the rare effect which it produces of delicately musical cadences. Similar charm inheres in the sweet and picturesque ingenuity of 'Love's Horoscope.'

But we must not linger over individual poems. Let it suffice to call attention to Crashaw's 'Wishes to his Supposed Mistress.' Am I guilty of overstatement when I express my opinion that its quality of thrilling tenderness makes it one of the loveliest lyrics of this lyric century? If we take any poem as typical of Crashaw, let it be this. It reveals more clearly perhaps than any other the debt which Crashaw owes to Jonson and to Donne; but his originality of treatment and of technique is likewise patent, and we are able to realize more clearly the poet's power of forging brilliant lines of glittering felicity.

Other poems show hectic beauties of style that delight and evade us. We see all the colors of the rainbow, but the rainbow vanishes even while we gaze, and leaves nothing but a chaste mystic pondering in his shy seclusion, and writing some of the sweetest and most artistic epitaphs of the age. And then suddenly, as we read, all the ardor and brave-soaring transport of his lyric inspiration is revived, and the metal comes red from the furnace. But then once more Crashaw becomes the Botticelli of poetry, his lines move with undulant pliancy, and the phrasing is miraculously complete. And so the process goes on. Do you see now why his poetry baffles analysis?

He is endowed with a kind of divine familiarity. Even his imperfections have the breath of life. He sings, we feel, because his nature forces him, and when it gains the mastery, the soul of the poet overflows in a flood of warm beauty and majestic power. Sudden tender apostrophes check the torrent of his luxuriant and flaming fancy, and yet underneath and regulating all there is a delicate poise of line and couplet, a loving dexterity of beautiful expression. If he sometimes gives a factitious value to what is poetically low, the fault is an original one, and we accept the splendid phrase thankfully, and dismiss the unworthy idea.

For Crashaw's place is high in the hierarchy of song. The subtlety of his emotion and the depth of his imaginative sensuousness are unearthly. The most evanescent emotions charge the leaping flame of his yearning. His imagination is imperial, but both thought and feeling are of the inmost, utmost things of faith.

In the ecstasy of his devotion his mind is abnormally active. Indeed

the conceit in Crashaw is, like his mysticism, the result of a certain flashing suddenness in establishing psychological associations. His impetuous devotion is like the sweeping rush of a fiery chariot, and carries the soul upward. Best of all, he is a Catholic, true to his faith and true to his inspiration; flawless as a man, genuine as a poet, faithful and pure.

He has thus left behind him poetry which sweetens our lives, calls forth our admiration, and stirs us to noble purposes. His religious emotion is of an enchanting beauty. Nowhere, perhaps, but in Southwell, do we find this peculiar blending of emotional tenderness with ascetic mysticism. But even Southwell's softened fire is not fanned by such an ecstasy of lyrical movement. Crashaw has been called the Christian Shelley, and in this, as in every paradox, there is much truth. For with Crashaw, to be was to be musical; life was a hymn. The hymn sweeps with majestic cadences, often wonderfully severe and solemn, yet always awfully intense. He grasps the eternal realities, and the melody of their expression is the music of a master.

It is miraculous how he finds words to clothe a subtle and ravishing emotion. We who listen hear lyric music flowing from a master's hand. Often the swell of cathedral organ is more limited than seems to be his majestic rising into the sublimity of seraphic adoration.

Rarely autobiographical, the seal of his individuality is stamped upon Crashaw's verse. We must love the man a little in order to appreciate his poetry. But once known he is unforgettable, and so forever down the years the flame and music of his song will echo as he appeals with characteristic self-effacement to his beloved Teresa.

'O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire;
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee His;
By all the Heav'n thou hast in Him,
Fair sister of the Seraphim!
By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die!'

THE BUTTERFLY

By Lucine Finch

Author of 'Two in Arcadia'

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

A Princess
Handmaid to the Princess
A Faun
A Moon Goddess

ACT I

Scene

A deep wood, dark but for the moonlight glimmering through the leaves. Silent but for the subtle noises of the night: the call of wood things and the passing of wind through high trees.

A faun comes leaping, playing on his reed pipe a weird, minor, tuneless melody. He is as wild as the unpathed wood, fierce in his abandon — a creature of the forest with the wind in his flying hair. Brown as the leaves that are falling about him. Without soul, without heart, but enchanting and charming in his freedom. He dashes in among the trees like a wind-blown leaf, and with haunting laughter, strange and elusive and inhuman, seems more a part of the deep wood than a separate thing.

In the midst of his leaping a pale and wonderful Moon Goddess enters the wood. She watches him, he not seeing her, with a certain sadness in her face, but also with a wisdom that is never sad. It is as if the rays of the moon lingered lovingly upon her, touching her hair with pale glow and gleaming on her white arms.

As she draws nearer the leaping creature, the luminous glow about her lightens the forest, and whirling he sees her and darts as though frightened behind a tree.

The Faun.—Art thou a human, thou?

The Moon Goddess.—Nay, like thee, I am at best a force,—
Hear me. I come a messenger to thee.
In my hands I bear a soul,

A quivering, eager, restless soul.
'Tis thine! A gift of gods, high gods above.
Stretch forth thy hands and take what is thine own.

(The FAUN, *startled, shrinks farther behind the tree.*)

The Faun (*in wonder and with unconscious premonition of fear*). — Who art thou?

Moon Goddess.— I am the Watcher of Births.
I stand beside the wondering maid
When gods first whisper in her ear
The marvel that she is to bear a child.
I soothe her fear, her wondering, startled, darting fear.
The new life lying next her heart
I watch and wait for, yearning o'er,—
Thou can'st not understand.

The Faun.— And what dost thou want with me?

Moon Goddess.— Draw near and I will tell thee.

(*The* FAUN *dances lightly towards her, darting back and forth, tantalizing, weird, elusive.*)

The Faun.— Nay! I come not near!
I stand behind a tree and hear.
Speak thou!

Moon Goddess.— When one late come from high gods dies,
His spirit flies straight as a bird to me.
A homing place am I for little baffled souls,
For little wandering, wistful souls.
And as I passed within the wood,
I heard a cry, a low, faint cry.
My heart was listening and I heard.
And there upon the earth a babe
New come, lay sick, and moaning, breathing fast.
And as I paused, Death rustled by
And gently closed the fluttering lids,
The little feeble, fluttering lids.
And from his mouth
A living violet flame crept forth.
Crept quivering forth and fluttered for a space
'Twixt him and me.
And lo! Here in my hands I bear it.
Nearer draw and listen,
'Tis thine!

The Faun (*withdrawing deeper into the wood*).— Mine!
Moon Goddess.— Thine!
The Faun (*leaping wildly*).— I will not have it! No! Not I!
Moon Goddess.— Thou needs must have it, thou!
The Faun.— But why?
Moon Goddess.— The gods have said — And who gainsays what
Gods have said?
That he who first is met by me,
Within the wood, upon the road,
The open road beneath the sky,
'Tis he to whom the soul belongs.
Thee have I met, and meeting thee
I give thee what thou needs must take.
'Tis thine!
The Faun (*laughing wildly and leaping like a wild thing*).—
A soul!
To me?
Nay, *not* to me!
What should I with it?
A soul means haunts of men,
And splendid, useless clothes,
And foolish jewels and thought of food!
And barren blitheness! Nay, not I!
For, once I met a man — a Prince —
And he was gaily clad, but he was sad
And sighed so —
But I am gay!
All day I play upon my pipes
With none to hear except
The wood things creeping near.
A soul? To me?
Nay, not to me!
Moon Goddess.— The gods have said.
The Faun.— My gods, here in my breast,
Say, nay!

(*The* Moon Goddess *remains quiet, looking fixedly at him. As she gazes a change comes over him. As he whirls and laughs flinging out his arms, the change grows more apparent.*)

The Faun (*bewildered*).— What is it thou hast done to me?
Moon Goddess.— Thy soul is entering into thee.

The Faun.— I am heavy here within —
A pain!
Moon Goddess.— The coming of a soul brings pain.
Kneel thou and receive.
The Faun.— Give it, thy quivering, violet flame,
To soulless men, for such they say
There are. But, I, a faun — !
Oh, let me go! I will not have a soul!
Oh! let me go!
What is it thou hast done to me?
Moon Goddess (*irrevocable and unmoved by his wild fear*).—
Kneel thou and receive.
The Faun (*wildly*).— I will not have a soul!
(*fearfully*).— I will not have a soul!
(*weakly*).— I will not have a soul!
(*Reaching forth his arms, limply, as through no willing of his own, and wearily, as if in fierce struggle*). — I will not have a soul! (*He falls exhausted.*)
Moon Goddess. Reach up thine arms—
And take what is thine own.
The Faun (*lying prone, reaches up weak arms*).— I will not —
I will not.
Oh, the pain!
(*His voice falters. He lies upon the ground helpless. The* Moon Goddess *very tenderly brushes his forehead with her lips, and throws about his neck a fine gold chain with a single pearl*).
'Tis bitter to become a man.
But men are nearer far to gods
Than thou, poor, leaping deep-wood thing!
Be thou a man.
Thou hast a soul.
And fierce unhappiness and pain,
And longing past all else, will come.
And sad'ning thought and dull despair,
And faltering, failings, sudden fear.
But heights as depths!
Thou art a man! Farewell!
(*She passes quietly out of the woods, lingeringly.*)
The Faun (*starting up, his face showing fear mingled with wonder and the new fierce joy of being*).—
I will not!

I will not!
Nay, give me not a soul! Nay! Nay!
(*The curtain falls.*)

ACT II

The Garden of the Palace

(*A very young and lovely princess sits beside a fountain playing with a golden ball. Her little maid runs after it and brings it back to her.*)

The Princess (*sings*).—Strings of pearl are in my hair,
Gold, gold, gold my hair!
And in my heart, who knows? who knows?
In my deep heart, who knows?

(*Breaking off in her song, mystically and dreamingly, the* PRINCESS *speaks.*)

Princess.— Little maid of mine thinkst thou he will come?

Little Maid.— Nay, I know not.

Princess.— But thinkst thou?

Little Maid.— Oh, he will come.

Princess.— I have sung my song and waited.

Little Maid.— Sweet Lady, have no fear,
Thou art so young and very fair.
He needs must come
Thou art so fair.

(*The* PRINCESS *laughs merrily and they two play gaily with the golden ball.*)

Princess.— And when he comes my little maid,
How will he be, think you?
Fine and straight like a slender tree, think you?

Little Maid.— Look in thine heart,
There shalt thou see.

Princess (*dreamingly*).— Yea, in my heart!

Little Maid.— Oh, let us play
And trouble not of men!
Throw thou me the ball!

Princess.— Yea, let us play.

(*They play again laughing merrily the while.*)

Princess.— Now, I to thee!

Little Maid.— Now, I to thee!

Princess.— And when he comes my little maid,
What will he say, think you?

Little Maid (*knowingly*).— Oh, men say ever
The same, same word.
Princess (*leaning toward her*).— Yea? What word say men?
Little Maid (*throwing ball and catching it*).— I love you — or, I love you not!
Princess.— How wise we are, we two!
Little Maid.— For we are women!
Princess.— I shall know him when he comes, think you?
Little Maid.— Oh, yea! For thou hast seen his image in thine heart.
Princess.— Else what can hearts be for?
Little Maid.— Oh, let him come,
If come he will!
It boots us not to watch,
For ill oft comes of watching.
Princess.— Ah! Little Maid,
Thou art a child,
And children very wise can be
So near are they to heart of things
From having been so little while
Here on the earth,
Where we grow dull, I fear.
Little Maid.— And you forget to play —
Princess.— Oh, yea! (*They play with the golden ball.*)
Princess (*throwing the ball from her into the garden*).—
Nimbly little maid, run, run —
And come not back.
Thou little, little, maid! (*kissing her.*)
(Little Maid *runs gaily off.*)
Princess.— Heart of mine, O heart of mine.
Be still! He comes,
My Prince, my Lord!
My dear Desire!
I have waited, singing out my heart to him,
When was it that he went from me?
A day? A thousand years?
Or did I dream and has he never come?
Yet, I have seen him with eyes of the heart.
Yea, he will come, he will come!
Yea, he must come, and I shall know —
(*She breaks off singing as at first and gazing into the fountain*).—
Strings of pearls are in my hair.

Gold, gold, gold my hair.
And in my heart.—

(*The* PRINCE *enters, the* PRINCESS *not seeing him. In wonder and child-like delight at so lovely a picture, he draws nearer the fountain and still nearer, gazing in as the* PRINCESS *does, hardly knowing the difference between the maiden and her image in the water. As she looks within, the* PRINCESS, *with sudden start of joy, sees the image of the* PRINCE. *They look up and for the space of a moment they stand looking into each other's eyes. Then, as if drawn by an irresistible force, they move toward each other.*)

The Princess.— Is it thou?
The Prince.— It is I.
The Princess.— Then thou hast come!
The Prince.— I have come — Beloved!
Princess.— I knew that thou wouldst come.
I sang to thee and waited.
The Prince.— I have been dull — I have been dull.
The Princess.— Art thou in pain?
The Prince.— Yea, mortal pain.
But thou — as I draw near thee —
The Princess.— Yea, thy pain will go.
I, too, was restless, eager, hurting here —
But thou — as I draw near thee —
The Prince.— Yea, thy pain will go.
The Princess.— Is it strange to thee that we — knew?
The Prince.— Nay, Beloved, not strange to me, and thou?
The Princess.— I am a woman. I knew that I must know
Thee when thou cam'st to me.
The Prince.— Within my heart I felt a pang —
A dull, unreasoning, thrilling pang.
'Twas thou that I did long for — thou!
The Princess.— And I for thee! Sit here beside me. . . .
Who art thou?
The Prince.— The one whom thou dost love!
The Princess.— Ah, yea. I know —
But of thy father and thy country
Say —
Prince (*mystically*).— I have no father, no country, I —
Princess.— But how strange! I do not understand!
Prince.— And must thou understand, Beloved?
Princess.— Nay,— I have thee for whom my heart has sung
And waited, singing.

Prince.— I come to thee out of a Silence.
Love thou me and question not.
Princess (*leaning to him*).—
Yea, I will love!
Prince.— Gold hair! Gold hair!
Princess.— 'Tis thine, as I am thine.
Prince (*to himself as he touches her hair lovingly*). —
And this it is to be a man,
To have a soul! And this I fought against,
Rebelling! Ah — I did not know!
Princess.— What sayst thou?
Prince.— Nay, Gold Hair, I spoke but idly to myself.
Princess.— I am thyself. Speak thou to me.
Prince.— Thou art indeed myself, and I am thee
Love thou me and question not.
Princess (*lightly*).—Art thou a mystery?
I have heard them say —
The wise heads of my father's court —
That men are mysteries, all, yea, all!
Prince (*smiling at her*).— And women?
Princess.— Of a truth!
I to myself am still unsolved.
I only know I have sung to thee—
It may be myriads of years,
Or days — all time — to thee!
Prince.— And I am come across the world
To thee!
Princess (*leaning towards him and touching his curls fondly*).—
Thou art fair and altogether lovely, sir.
Prince.— Thou art — thou *art!*
I did not know a woman could so lovely be!
Princess.— This chain about thy neck —
Who gave it thee?
(*The* PRINCE *takes it hurriedly from her hand.*)
Princess.— Who gave it thee? A woman?
Prince (*withdrawing*).— Nay. It came with me out of the Silence.
Princess.— Give it to me!
Prince.— Nay, sweet. Nay, sweet.
Princess (*in wonder*).— Nay?
Prince (*smiling at her*).— Yea, nay.
Princess.— But thou art strange!

(*The* PRINCE *is silent.*)
Princess.— Lov'st thou me beyond all else?
Prince.— Beyond all else, Beloved.
Princess.— Then give it me!
Prince.— Nay, sweet — nay, sweet.
Princess (*drawing away from him*).— Thou lov'st me not as I love thee,
Didst thou ask aught,
'Twere thine before the fair request were made.
Thou lov'st me not!
Prince.— Child! Little Gold Child!
I love thee.
Thou asketh what thou knoweth not.
Princess.— The mystery again!
Prince.— Remember, out of the Silence
Came I to thee!
Princess.— If I laugh wilt thou give it me?
Prince.— Nay, sweet.
Princess.— If I weep, then?
Prince.— Nay, sweet.
Princess.— Of a truth! If I — command?
Prince.— Nay, sweet.
Princess (*in anger*).— I am not used to beg, sir.
(*The* PRINCE *is bewildered by her swift, changing mood*).
Prince.— Forgive my churlishness, sweet maid.
And trust me! All of me is thine.
My heart, my brain, my spirit —
All are thine. But this —
This slender chain thou asketh me,
I cannot give — I dare not give it thee.
Princess (*rising*).— Thou art not he.
I know thee not.
Thou art a stranger unto me!
Prince.— And yet thou knewest me
When I, Beloved, came to thee.
Princess.— A little thing I ask of thee.
Prince.— Thou knoweth not what thou asketh, Child.
Princess.— I know thou dost refuse it me.
Dost thou refuse?
Prince.— Sweet maid, I pray —
Princess.— *Dost* thou refuse?
Prince (*bowing his head sadly*).— I must refuse.

Princess (*bitterly and lightly*).— So men are made!
Well! Thou cam'st
And thou didst stay a little space.
So are men made.
Well! And thou wilt go
And I forget that thou wert here.
Prince.— Thou can'st not, dear, forget!
Princess.— I can forget.
I have forgot!
So women are. Now go!
The Prince.— Wilt thou not let me keep — my soul?
The Princess.— Thy soul is mine as mine is thine.
No silence comes between!
The Prince.— Ah, yea!
The Princess.— And nay,
I say!
The Prince.— There are some veils
That even Love
Must leave unlifted,
Sweet!
The Princess.— Nay! none between us if we love!
Prince (*pause*).— If I tell thee, wilt thou hear
And understand and question not?
Princess (*coldly*).— I ask a gift.
I do not ask to hear.
I ask a gift.
Dost thou refuse?
Prince.— What shall I say?
Princess.— Dost thou refuse?

(PRINCE *hesitates, looking sadly at her. She remains cold and silent, gazing back at him.*)

Prince.— Nay, nay, nay!
Take thou thy gift!
And on thy heart — the deed!

(*He slowly unclasps the chain. As he takes it from about his neck, a change comes over him. He begins to laugh, a weird half laugh, half cry. He leaps into the air and throws out his arms wildly. He flings the chain to the wondering* PRINCESS *and whirls about with strange fantastic steps, darting and dashing hither and thither like a wind-blown leaf. The chain falls at the feet of the* PRINCESS. *She does not stoop for it and it lies between them.*)

Princess (*fearfully*).— Who art thou?

The Faun.— A spirit — freed!

Princess.— Art thou not he?

The Faun (*tauntingly and mockingly*).— Nay, sweet!

(*The* PRINCESS *starts back as though he had struck her.*)

Princess.— Dost thou not love me?

The Faun (*mocking still*).— Nay, sweet!

(*The* PRINCESS *sinks down by the fountain weeping and wondering. The* FAUN *steals towards her and picks up the chain with the single pearl and throws it over her head.*)

The Faun.— Have thou thy gift.

Princess.— And thou?

The Faun.— I? To the deep wood I will go
Where none dare come
Save wildest wood things creeping near.
Now am I free! See how I leap;
I laugh! I laugh at thee!
What foolish jewels thou wearest, thou!
What foolish robes of stiff, harsh, gold!
And a crown upon thy foolish head!
And in thy heart — pain, pain, pain!

(*He rushes out laughing wildly, but with a strange half sob in his laughter.*)

(*The* PRINCESS *takes the chain from about her neck and throws it into the fountain. As it sinks a butterfly flutters up, softly whirring past her. Its beautiful wings are broken and marred, and its flutterings are feeble. It sinks exhausted at the feet of the* PRINCESS.)

Princess.— Thou too art sick! (*She takes the broken thing tenderly in her soft white hands and bends over it weeping.*)
Thou, too, art sick!

ACT III

(*The deep wood. The ground is bare but for the dull brown leaves that cover it. The* FAUN *sits sad and listless under a tree. His pipe lies silent in his hands. He gazes moodily into the tree tops.*)

The Faun.— It is drear in the woods
And the moonlight is pale.
I am sick — and a heaviness comes
When I seek to remember.
Yet, I cannot forget.
And the cry of my heart

(For I know by the pain burning here
'Tis my heart,)
'Oh, less than a human
And more than a Faun!"
I have held in my breast
A man's soul — for a space.
I have lost what was mine,
A man's soul for a space.
I dare not remember.
I may not forget.
Why, why did high gods
Seek me out in my woods
And thrust to my keeping — a soul?
And yet, it was mine.
And I thrill with the pain.
And the heaviness here, 'tis my heart.
Can it be that my heart
Once human and given to her
Shall ever be human
And — given to her?
My laughing is hollow,
My laughing is pain;
And yet — the soul that I had,
Of high gods given me
It was mine for a space
For a space it was hers.
Whatever has been can never be lost.
Oh, I dare not remember!
I may not forget.

(*He rises with fierce determination and draggingly begins his wild leaping, his weird singing. Yet through it all his steps falter and his voice has lost its joyous ring. He sits down beneath the tree again, dull and listless.*

(*The* PRINCESS *comes into the wood. She is footsore and weary and her golden gown is torn and earth stained. She leans heavily against a tree. In her clasped hands she holds a butterfly.*)

Princess.— Weary and worn! Weary and worn!
And my spirit is torn.
Since he went — strangely changed —
Have I sought him.
Will my seeking ne'er cease?
Will my seeking bring peace?

Weary and worn! Weary and worn!
And my spirit is torn.

(*Suddenly she sees the* FAUN *sitting dull and listless under the tree.*)

Princess.— Thou!

The Faun (*fiercely*)—Why hast thou come?
To torture me?
To taunt me, thou?
Why hast thou come?

Princess.— To give thee back thine own.

The Faun.— Nay, give it not to me again,
For giving me means useless pain!

Princess.—The golden chain I begged of thee
With single pearl, wrought wondrously,
I threw into the fountain's pool.
I threw it fiercely, miserably,
Our happiness — our moment's joy!
But as it fell into the pool
A butterfly came fluttering forth,
All wounded, broken-winged and weak.
'Twas all was left to me of thee,
And thou wast all my life to me
In our few golden moments, thou.
Wilt thou receive it for the sake
Of golden moments sped away?

The Faun.— Nay, nay, I choose not pain —
And yet, not choosing, pain is here.

Princess.— For the sake of golden moments,
And our youth; my ignorance,
My knowledge now of pain.
For the sake of all that might have been
Had I not begged of thee the chain,
Wilt thou receive —

The Faun (*bitterly, cruelly*).— I am afraid — afraid of souls!
And golden moments swiftly pass —

Princess.— For the sake of what thou art to me —
Receive!

The Faun.— Nay, nay!

Princess.— Alas!

(*She swoons, falling toward the* FAUN *who catches her. Her hair, like a fine gold chain, falls across his shoulder. He sinks with her very gently, until she lies along the ground, limp and white, like a broken flower.*)

The Faun.— Ah! die! Thou may'st!
A human thou, but I —?
Less than a human and
More than a Faun!
(*He is deeply moved as her golden hair brushes his shoulder.*)
How gold her hair!
A golden chain,
Her face a single pearl. (*Pause*).
Unclasp thy hands
Like lilies shut
To hide their hearts —
Unclasp!

(*He leans over her, not touching her, with a beautiful wonder at her weakness in his face and a tense longing to penetrate the mystery that lies between them.*)

O thou! What art thou!
Mystery of mysteries!
What art thou?
White and gold
And like a flower
Whose heart is hid
What art thou?

(*He very gently unclasps her hands and a white butterfly flutters forth, hovering near her. The* FAUN *is torn between his fear of having a soul and his love for the* PRINCESS. *The struggle is sharp and fierce.*)

The Faun.— For the sake of what thou art to me
Of joy — of pain — or misery,
I will receive.

(*The butterfly poises for a moment on his upheld hand. The* PRINCESS *stirs as if new life came to her.*)

The Princess.— Thou hast received?

Prince.— Beloved, yea.
And peace
And joy
And thou!

Princess.— Ah, yea!

(*He kisses her reverently upon her white forehead and on her gold hair. He kisses her upon her lips. The* MOON GODDESS *passes in the edge of the wood with a wise smile on her face. The white butterfly hovers, fluttering about their heads.*)

(*The curtain falls.*)

HORACE: EPODE XI

TRANSLATED BY THOMAS EWING, JR.

I've no pleasure now, Pecti heretofore happy
Writing an odd scrap of verse, so sorely by Cupid smitten;
For Cupid is singling out me above any
Daintily limbed pretty boy or girl to use despitefully.

Here is the third December, after conquering
My love of Inachia, that strews the autumn foliage.
Woe's me! throughout town — I'm ashamed of such folly —
Talked of of all men am I? Festivities still called to mind,
Where sits the wooer listless and melancholy,
And piteously respiring sighs, to lighten weariness.

"Are paltry riches still to win the victory,
Manly talent never?" I lamenting often cry to you,
When, all a-fever, unsimulating Bacchus
With nappy wine attacking me hotly, lay bare my bosom."

"Now that within tumultuous rebellion is
Freely welling; to the winds flinging the thankless antidotes
That never a cruel wound even alleviate;
Shame will abide not a submission to my inferiors."

Thus it is determined, you present; I praise the course,
And, bidden, I'd tarry home; alas the footsteps wandering
Led me to entries, ah, not open, and to doors,
Ah, very stony; whither hurried on I bruise my body.

DAS TRUNKNE LIED*

By Friedrich Nietzsche

Translated by Sylvester Baxter

O man! Give heed!
The word of midnight who may read?
'Asleep, asleep —
And then to wake from deepest dream:—
The world is deep,
Far deeper than the day would deem.
Deep is its woe !
Joy — deeper yet than woe may be.
Woe cries: "But go!"
While joy demands Eternity,
All joy wants deep Eternity!'

*The original, together with Tille's translation, was published with a new version, by Dr. William Benjamin Smith, in Poet Lore, several years ago (Autumn Number, 1905). Here is still another version of this great little poem.